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REGINALD'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER VII.

Good actions crown themselves with lasting bays.
ÆNEAS.

MRS. REID WESTCOURT'S particular weakness, as may have been suspected from her violent distaste towards her husband's business, was a love of fashionable society. As the daughter of an officer she had formed the acquaintance of several country families, by whom she had been tolerated rather than cordially received. To strengthen her position and secure an undisputed foothold in their aristocratic circle, she had married Reid Westcourt, ignoring his business, and reflecting only that he came of a family much better than her own, and that his brother and sister-in-law were magnates in their own county.

But having left her village home and entered upon her married life in town, Mrs. Westcourt had found that her bright anticipations were not all to be realized. The families who had tolerated her in the country did not seek to renew acquaintance with her during their London season, not caring, perhaps, to introduce a tradesman's wife. Reginald Westcourt and his wife, who cherished a cordial respect for the younger brother, always invited them to their entertainments, but these invitations, when accepted, were always productive of much jealousy and heart-burning. Nevertheless, when Lady Westcourt died Mrs. Reid Westcourt felt a sudden void in her life—knowing that, unless her husband abjured trade, her future life would be circumscribed to one dull routine, and all glimpses of the brilliant would be denied her.

The only friend of former days who still kept up acquaintance with her was the widow of one of her father's friends, a Mrs. Col. Delvan, an elderly lady of family and fortune. Mrs. Westcourt regarded her as the portal by which she should yet re-enter her favourite society, and exerted herself to the utmost to win and retain Mrs. Delvan's friendship.

The merchant's wife, learning that Mrs. Delvan was entertaining a friend from the country for a few weeks,

had called, finding neither at home, and she was now every day expecting the call to be returned.

The morning after the interview between Mr. Westcourt and his clerk, the merchant's wife was seated in her drawing-room. There was a look of ill-repressed anxiety on her countenance, a look produced by self-approach for the part she had acted towards Reginald. She had tried to stifle the voice of conscience by thinking that it was now too late to retrace her steps in the matter, and that her husband would not listen to any remonstrances. The reflection which gave her most solace was that her daughter would most benefit by the lad's death, and with a part of his fortune as a dowry must ultimately contract a brilliant marriage.

She was not now thinking of Reginald. Oriana sat near the fire, with Willa beside her, engaged in attiring her favourite doll, and as her mother watched her she indulged in proud dreams of the future.

"Oriana," she said, at length, breaking the silence, "be careful of your dress, dear. I expect a visit this morning from Mrs. Delvan and her friend, and I want you to make a good impression upon them."

"Who is her friend?" asked the daughter, with an air of interest, carefully adjusting the folds of her dress.

"She is a Miss Tracy, of Lincolnshire. She comes of a very old family, and is very rich. She is not at all young, I hear—quite an old maid, in fact—and if you should interest her I presume she would invite you to her country seat."

"I wish she would!" replied Oriana. "I'd like to go to-morrow, if it is cold weather. Perhaps she'll give me presents too."

"Do you think she'll invite me, Ory?" asked Willa, timidly. "My mother's name was Tracy—it's written in her Bible."

Oriana glanced contemptuously at her little companion, and was about to reply, when the door opened, and the subject of their remarks was announced with her friend Mrs. Delvan.

Mrs. Westcourt had not before met Miss Tracy, and was rather surprised at beholding a tall, elegant lady

of about thirty years, of unusually striking appearance.

Miss Tracy possessed a well-rounded, well-developed figure, and a countenance strongly indicative of character. Her eyes were dark, keen, and penetrating; her nose was a delicate aquiline; her mouth well proportioned to her other features, and her complexion had little colour.

There was an expression of habitual reserve and self-repression on her face, and a haughtiness and abruptness in her manner, that caused her hostess to set her down in her own thoughts as an "eccentric, strong-minded woman."

While these characteristics did not transcend the bounds of good breeding, they yet indicated an interesting and puzzling character.

All this was seen in the course of a few minutes, while the hostess was being introduced to her and exchanging the compliments of the day.

Oriana's presence had been quite forgotten by her mother, but that young lady now came forward, claiming her share of attention. Mrs. Westcourt introduced her with evident pride to Miss Tracy, whose manner in addressing the child seemed very formal.

Perhaps the reason was that there was nothing childlike about Oriana. She was already a "little lady" in manners and dress, and there was a painful lack of childish enthusiasm in her movements and expression.

As Miss Tracy turned from Oriana, her glance rested upon a little head covered with tiny curls, which was projected from behind a chair, where its timid owner believed herself securely hidden. The little sparkling face, with its eager eyes fixed upon her, immediately riveted her attention; her manner softened, and a gentle sadness transfigured her countenance.

It was evident, from this change, that the lady's heart possessed depths of which the world knew little.

"You have another daughter, I see, Mrs. Westcourt," she said, with a sigh.

The merchant's wife glanced at Willa, involun-

farly marking the contrast she presented to her own child, and replied:

"That child is not my daughter, Miss Tracy; I have but one. She is simply a little girl whom I have taken as a companion for Oriana. Willa," she added, addressing the little maiden, "you may go up to the nursery; I don't like you to stare so!"

"Willa?" repeated Miss Tracy, with some agitation. "Is her name Willa? She looks very like a Willa I once knew!"

The little girl left the room at this juncture, much to Mrs. Westcourt's relief, not liking her daughter to be so obscured. After a minute's reflection, she remarked:

"You seem to have taken a great interest in Willa, Miss Tracy?"

"I have, indeed," replied the visitor. "Is she a relative of yourself or of your husband?"

"Of neither. She is a child whom I have taken out of charity. Her mother was a school-fellow of mine, who cherished her girlish friendship for me long after our school days had ended. She married against the will of a relative, and was discarded by him. Her husband was a professional man, dependent entirely upon his own exertions; and at his death, some years ago, he left her but slenderly provided for. She died a year ago, leaving her daughter penniless and to my care. I accepted the charge, for my old school-mate had been like a sister to me, and I could not endure the thought that her child should be homeless. Since then Willa has been a daughter to me and a sister to my child."

Mrs. Westcourt told the story as if expecting praise for her own generous conduct towards Willa, but Miss Tracy bestowed none, asking, with increased agitation of manner:

"What was her mother's name?"

"Willa Tracy. How singular—the same surname as your own. She married a gentleman named Heath—Roland Heath!"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Miss Tracy. "Willa Tracy was my niece—although not many years younger than myself. She married while I was living abroad. I returned to England only a year since, but could not find a trace of her, or learn that she had left a child!"

"I remember Willa Tracy used to speak of an aunt who was living abroad," said Mrs. Westcourt. "So little Willa turns out to be your great-niece. How very singular!"

Miss Tracy looked pale with the excitement of her discovery, and said:

"I must beg of you, Mrs. Westcourt, to recall Willa. She looked at me so steadily that I fancy she must have seen something familiar in my face. Formerly I was not unlike her mother!"

Mrs. Westcourt inwardly smiled at the thought that this grave, self-possessed, frozen-looking lady could ever have been considered like the merry, sparkling Willa she had known, but she was polite enough to conceal her amusement and send her daughter in search of her little companion.

"Yes, I remember you as being very merry and gay," said Mrs. Delvan, "that was before you went abroad, my dear. You have changed greatly during your long residence in foreign countries—your old frankness seems quite frozen out of you!"

Miss Tracy smiled faintly at her friend's remark, but the smile was full of pain and bitterness.

Mrs. Westcourt wondered, in her own mind, what cause could have so changed Miss Tracy, but her musings were interrupted by the entrance of the children.

"Come to me, Willa," said Miss Tracy; "I am your aunt!"

The tone with which she addressed the child, and declared the relationship existing between them, was strangely soft and winning. Willa surveyed her a moment with a steadfast gaze, then advanced with childish confidence, and was clasped tenderly to her heart.

"Of course, my dear Mrs. Westcourt," said Miss Tracy, lifting the child to her knee, and folding her to her bosom, "I must claim my niece!"

"I cannot object to your doing so, although I shall deeply regret parting with her," replied Mrs. Westcourt, hardly knowing whether to rejoice or grieve at Willa's good fortune. "She is a lovely child, and we shall deeply regret her loss. Oriana is greatly attached to her. I should be tempted to deny your claim, my dear Miss Tracy, but I feel sure that you can do so much better for her than we can."

"I shall adopt her as my own child," responded the visitor, looking tenderly down upon the head that nestled in her bosom.

"My dear," said Mrs. Delvan, in an undertone, "you are young yet and may marry."

"No, I shall never marry," replied Miss Tracy, her countenance convulsed with a look of pain. "I intend," she added, with assumed highness, "to educate this child, whom Providence has so strangely

bestowed upon me. I shall find happiness in forming her character and gaining her love. At last I have something to live for!"

"I am glad that Willa has found such a friend," remarked Mrs. Westcourt, blandly; "but I do not like to think that the ties of affection which unite her and Oriana should be severed. You will allow dear little Willa to visit us often, will you not, Miss Tracy?"

Willa's new-found aunt was not at all deceived by this remark. She had noticed the manner of her hostess when proclaiming her benevolence to the orphan child, and had seen that the latter was regarded as an object of charity by both mother and daughter.

She had also noticed in the imperious manner of Oriana and the shrinking, deprecating attitude of her little "companion," that Willa's position in the family had not been at all pleasant.

Notwithstanding these facts, Miss Tracy inclined towards yielding to Mrs. Westcourt's request.

She reflected that the merchant's wife had given a home, such as it was, with care and attention to her little niece, and it would not be possible to repay her in money. She therefore replied:

"I hardly think, Mrs. Westcourt, that I can part with my newly found treasure, even to visit you. I intend to reside altogether at Longholme, and, if you are willing, should be pleased to welcome Miss Oriana whenever she is tired of town or desires Willa's society!"

This invitation was what the proud mother especially desired. To have her daughter on visiting terms with Miss Tracy, to have her spend weeks in the midst of aristocratic society, seemed to her the pinnacle of bliss.

In her own mind she beheld that society attracted to her own house by Oriana, when she should have become older, and herself on the full tide of fashionable life.

She expressed her pleasure in warm terms, dwelling upon the affection felt for each other by the children, and asked how long her visitor intended to remain in town.

"I had intended to return to-morrow," answered Miss Tracy, "and as my people all expect me I think I shall carry out my intention. That is," she added, with a smile, "if my little niece have no objection. It seems to me, darling," she said, addressing Willa, "that you are strangely silent. Don't you want to go to my beautiful home in the country where there are birds and flowers and green fields?"

Willa yielded a grave assent, adding:

"Shall I always live there?"

"I hope so. I am your aunt, you know, and I am going to be your mother, so my home will be yours. You shall have a pony—"

"A pony?" ejaculated Oriana.

"A pony?" cried Willa, eagerly. "Oh, Regie shall ride it every day. You want Regie, too, don't you?"

"Regie? Who is Regie, darling?"

"Why, don't you know Regie? He's a boy—the best and darriestest boy in the world. He's my friend!"

Willa spoke proudly, as if "Regie's" friendship were beyond all price, but the answer did not seem to enlighten her aunt. Mrs. Westcourt explained:

"Regie, as Willa calls him, is my husband's nephew, Reginald Westcourt. He is very fond of your little niece."

"I remember the elder Reginald Westcourt, his father," remarked Miss Tracy. "Is the lad like him?"

"In some respects," replied the merchant's wife, uneasily, "but he is not healthy. Willa, dear," she added, wishing to change the subject, "won't you be sorry to leave us all?"

Willa shrank closer to her aunt as if for protection, and that simple appealing act aroused for her in a moment all the tender sympathies and love in Miss Tracy's nature.

"She will see Oriana often at Longholme, will she not?" she asked, without giving the child a chance to reply. "And Oriana shall have a pony when she comes, and we will have delightful rides together."

Oriana expressed her delight at this promise, and Miss Tracy then bade her niece get ready to return with her to Mrs. Delvan's, adding:

"You see, Mrs. Westcourt, that I have already become deeply attached to the child. I can hardly bear to have her leave my sight!"

When Willa returned to the drawing-room with her out-door clothing on, she carried a small parcel of books in her arms, including those given her by Reginald on his departure, and her mother's Bible.

"What are you going to do with all these?" asked her aunt, in surprise. "You had better leave them, Willa."

"This was my mother's Bible," declared Willa, "and Regie gave me these story-books. I want to take them all with me."

Miss Tracy took the Bible, glanced upon the fly-leaf at the inscription, and showed some emotion as she recognized the handwriting.

"You shall take this, my dear," she said.

"Allow her to take them all," said Mrs. Westcourt, smiling. "At least, Miss Tracy, allow me to send them with her trunk to Mrs. Delvan's."

The visitor would gladly have declined books, trunk, and all, but she did not wish to grieve Willa, or anger her late protector, so she acceded to the request.

After a farther conversation, the visitors rose to take leave, Willa made her adieu, Mrs. Delvan led the way to the carriage, and gave the order for home.

"Are you my Aunt Johanna?" asked Willa, thoughtfully, as they drove onwards, her little form nestled closely to her aunt.

"Yes, dear, I am your Aunt Johanna. But how did you know my name?" responded Miss Tracy.

"I used to hear my mother wish she knew where Aunt Johanna was. She said she would take care of me!"

"So she will!" declared her relative. "You are going to be loved and taken care of all the rest of your life!"

She looked fondly at her little charge, and then said to Mrs. Delvan:

"How providential was our visit to Mrs. Westcourt this morning! Notwithstanding your acquaintance with her, you knew nothing of Willa's child."

"I knew that Mrs. Westcourt had a child in her family who was not her own, but I did not know whose it was. I did not know your niece, my dear."

"Of course," said Miss Tracy, "I shall not allow my niece and heiress to wear the clothes of charity. So when her trunk comes to your house, I must beg of you to use its contents in your charitable visits to the poor. I am going to spend the day in shopping for Willa, and I shall purchase a gift for Mrs. Westcourt."

By the time this decision had been arrived at the carriage stopped at Mrs. Delvan's residence, and the coachman received orders to be at the door again in half an hour.

Willa was then conducted into the warm drawing-room, bestowed in a great arm-chair, and patted by her new friends in what was to her a most bewildering manner.

"Now what do you want, Willa?" asked her aunt, sitting down by her. "I know all about dolls and toys, for you shall not be cheated out of your happy childhood yet, and the story-books, and those things. You shall have a writing-desk, a work-box, a dressing-case, and new dresses. What else shall I get for you? Don't be afraid to mention anything you want. Aunt Johanna's purse is very deep!"

"I'd like to have Regie go to Longholme too," was the reply. "Regie needs a pony—the doctor said so!"

"Where is Regie?"

"His uncle has put him in his old office," answered Willa, earnestly, and with indignation. "Regie don't like an office; but his uncle does, and says Regie is poor. I know better, and so does Regie."

"Who told you all this, Willa?"

"Why, Regie."

Miss Tracy involuntarily smiled, then looked thoughtful, as she asked:

"Is this simply child's talk, Mrs. Delvan, or is there sense in it? Did Reginald Westcourt leave anything? He must have done so!"

"Certainly he did. You couldn't ask that question if you had not been abroad so long. Still nothing is known of his affairs. He died in the East. His brother, Mr. Reid Westcourt, is his son's guardian, and a very honourable, upright man. Probably young Reginald's fortune has been lost, or become embarrassed in some way, and his uncle has deemed it best to put him into his own business. It is hardly the thing, perhaps, for the son of Reginald Westcourt, but I dare say the lad's uncle does as well as he can by him. He could do no better by his own son!"

"True. And so, Willa," added her aunt, "you want Regie to go with us to the country. I am sorry that he cannot, but he may come and visit us before you go. I'll write a note to his uncle, asking him to allow Reginald to visit us this evening. Would you like that?"

Willa assented, somewhat disappointed that the lad was not to share her future happiness, and Miss Tracy instantly wrote the note to Mr. Westcourt and despatched it.

By the time it was finished the carriage came to the door, and the ladies, with Willa, set out on a shopping expedition.

The day was passed in making purchases; among others a handsome present for Mrs. Westcourt,

another for Oriana, and Willa felt overwhelmed at the sight of the beautiful things her aunt lavished upon her.

The shopping was completed by dinner time, and the two returned to their repast fatigued yet delighted with the results of the day's labours.

About seven o'clock, when the little party were gathered in Mrs. Delvan's drawing-room, around the cheerful fire, Reginald Westcourt was announced.

Willa flew to meet him, and was clasped in his arms, both forgetting the presence of others.

The little maiden was the first to recollect that they were not alone, and said:

"You know, Regie, that I have found my Aunt Johanna I've told you about. Here she is! You must love her very much, for I do!"

With this simple introduction, she conducted him to Miss Tracy, whose countenance beamed with a gentle and tender expression.

She had been listening to a long account from Willa of his championship of her rights and his love and care for her, and she now welcomed him with a loving kiss.

Reginald was then introduced to Mrs. Delvan, and took his seat beside Willa, at a little distance from the ladies.

"So you got my aunt's note?" inquired the little girl.

"My uncle did and gave it me to read. He said that as Mrs. Delvan was such a particular friend of my aunt, I might come up and see you this evening. I am to be back at the office by ten!"

"I'm sorry you can't go with us to Longholme," said Willa, sorrowfully. "But never mind, Regie, you'll come and see us next summer and ride on my pony, won't you?"

The lad promised, endeavouring to repress his tears at the thought of their approaching separation.

He had sufficient good sense to see that Willa would be immeasurably better off with her aunt in a home where she would be the reigning queen, and be loved and cared for, and he rejoiced that she would no longer be dominated over by Oriana; nevertheless, his heart sank at the thought that henceforth there would be a great gulf between them.

"Willa," he said, resolved to communicate to her his fears, "if my uncle should have spoken truly, and I should be penniless, just think what a difference there would be between you and me! Oh, you won't forget me, will you, Willa? When you are rich and I poor—"

"Forget you, Regie?" interrupted Willa, with wondering eyes. "Why, you are my best friend! You know we are going to live together when we get older. And if I am rich I'll give you all my money!"

Reginald could not longer indulge his fears that Willa might be spoiled by prosperity.

He felt that her simple, honest nature was proof against deteriorating influences, and his face beamed as he said:

"I shall claim you one of these days, Willa. When men grow up they get married, and you are to be my little wife, you know!"

Willa assented, proud and happy at Reginald's declaration, yet comprehending only that some time she would see "Regie" every day and love him and comfort him.

The little couple planned a happy future, and talked of the approaching summer when the lad should visit Longholme, his uncle's consent being taken for granted, and of the correspondence which should be regularly kept up between them.

The lad was rather fearful that Miss Tracy might object to this proposed exchange of letters, and appealed to her for her consent, which she readily granted.

"Willa's friends are my friends," she said, kindly. "I have confidence in you, Reginald, and believe that you are a fit companion for my little niece. Your father was good and noble, and I trust that his son resembles him."

Reginald gave a look of gratitude to Miss Tracy for this tribute to his father, whose memory he tenderly revered, and immediately declared to Willa in an under-tone that her aunt was one of the nicest ladies he had ever seen.

His boyish heart was quite won by her kindness.

While the lad and Willa conversed apart, Miss Tracy and Mrs. Delvan kept up a sort of conversation in order not to place any restraint upon the young couple, and the hostess wondered at the softened face and manners of her guest, attributing the change rightly to the interest she was taking in her little niece.

The time wore on, and at length Reginald said that he must go, or he should barely arrive at the office before ten o'clock.

He made his adieux to his hostess and Miss Tracy, and was followed to the door by Willa, who there exchanged a few final words with him.

The little maiden was absent so long from the

drawing-room that Miss Tracy was about to seek her when she returned, so pale, sad, and subdued that her aunt's heart was touched.

She took her in her arms and devoted herself to the task of consoling her, soon succeeding in winning a faint smile upon the little innocent face.

That night, for the first time since her mother's death, Willa's curly head was pillowed upon a loving breast.

The next day, wrapped in furs, she set out with her aunt for her new home in Lincolnshire.

CHAPTER VIII.

Horror and doubt distract

His troubled thoughts, and from the bottom stir
The hell within him. *Milton*

On leaving the sanctum of his employer, Fennes paused a moment in the counting-house to summon up his courage to meet the gaze of his fellow-clerks. Very few of the employees were ever admitted even there, unless to be dismissed or severely reprimanded, and he knew that his summons could not have failed to excite comment.

Reginald did not look up from his work upon his return to the ante-room, and he had several minutes in which to compose himself. At length, hearing the steps of the merchant approaching the door, he abruptly retreated to the sale-room, where, as he had expected, his appearance was the signal for various questions.

His pale face and look of trepidation were regarded as proofs positive that his employer had spoken harshly to him; and the clerk, not knowing how he could otherwise account for his changed appearance, and his late interview with Mr. Westcourt, took pains to confirm the general impression.

When one of his fellow-clerks asked him if he had not been summoned to a private conference on account of the dislike he had lately expressed against the merchant, he replied in the affirmative.

"Are you going away, Fennes?" asked another. "Would to heaven I had gone before this!" was the reply of the miserable clerk. "Do let me alone, boys, I don't feel well."

One of the salesmen managed to elicit the fact that Fennes expected to remain, and he gave it as his opinion to his companions that Mr. Westcourt had very kindly resolved to give the disaffected clerk another trial before dismissing him. This declaration from one of their number served to increase the merchant's popularity among his subordinates, which sentiment they showed by turning their backs upon Fennes.

But that unhappy man, glad to be rid of their questioning words and glances, retreated to his books and resumed the copying of an invoice. His pen moved idly over the pages, while his thoughts were intent upon his gentle Mary and the terrible hold which his employer had upon him.

When Mr. Westcourt came through, about to depart for home, his manner, to avoid suspicion, was studiously cold towards Fennes, while the clerk bent closely over his book, pretending not to see him.

Every eye in the room witnessed the conduct of both, and the conclusions that were drawn were favourable only to the merchant.

Fennes was the first clerk to leave at the usual hour, not caring to encounter any more questions, but he was too restless to proceed to his lodgings, and therefore wandered about the streets, finally spending the evening at a place of amusement, hoping to drown all thought.

But the harder he tried the more difficult became the task. The forbidden subject would rise, despite all his efforts, and he indulged in various speculations as to the reason why his employer found it desirable to gain money in such a dishonest manner. He finally concluded, rightly, that the merchant had gone beyond his depth in speculating, that he was in need of a large sum of money, that he did not like to borrow, and that the circumstance of being insured to twice the value of his possessions had overcome whatever honesty he might have had.

At a late hour the clerk sought his plain but comfortable lodgings, and tried to sleep, but his eyes were not closed in slumber until near morning, and then he dreamed of Mary's reproachful eyes and her disarming voice.

At a late hour the next morning he sought his business. The clerks were all busy when he entered, and Mr. Westcourt could be seen through the glass door that opened into the counting-house. The late arrival of Fennes elicited a look of surprise, for Mr. Hutchley always insisted upon perfect regularity in the appearance of his subordinates, and it was evident that the clerks expected their comrade to be reprimanded by their employer.

But they were disappointed. Mr. Westcourt took no notice of him, although Fennes occasionally presented a strange, persistent gaze in his direction.

When the letters arrived, and the merchant read the note of Miss Tracy and threw it to his nephew, Fennes was looking at him so earnestly that his employer retreated from view to his own desk.

A dozen times that day the unfortunate clerk was tempted to rush from the office and fly to his betrothed, tell her the whole story, and solicit her advice, but the impulse was checked each time by the reflection that Mary must then learn that he was a forger, and reject him.

Besides, he reflected that, if she would still cling to him, he would be torn from her by the officers of the law, tried, and sentenced to transportation. In either case, he would kill her, he believed.

Again, he was tempted at times to commit suicide, and thus end his troubles in this world, but life was too sweet to fly to the coward's refuge—a voluntary death.

As the day passed his mind grew calmer, and he thought more upon the benefits that would accrue to him from the proposed crime. One brief act, and he should be able to claim Mary, would be envied by his old associates, and advanced in his business. He reasoned that he could not escape from his employer's clutches, that he could not refuse to commit the sin required of him, and that, really, there was little risk of discovery. The weak-principled young man finally quieted his conscience by these thoughts, and began to consider the ways and means of carrying out his proposed crime.

As on the previous evening, he was the first clerk to leave. He wandered about aimlessly, sometimes approaching the bridges, and then seeking more sheltered localities, buying at one small shop a box of matches, and at others small quantities of combustibles such as could be readily concealed about his person.

About eight o'clock he returned to the office, gained admittance by means of a key, lighted a small lantern, and surveyed the scene of his operations.

How very different that room looked to him by night, with guilty thoughts in his heart, from its appearance in the broad day when the busy clerks made it pleasant.

He seated himself for a moment, but then started up, remembering that Reginald slept in the building, and might be upstairs at that moment. To make himself sure, he crept, lantern in hand, up to the boy's chamber; but he was not there.

In fact, as the reader knows, Reginald was then paying his parting visit to Willa.

"He has gone out for the evening," thought the clerk, returning to the sale-room. "I hope he won't come in to-night. I shall not begin my operations till midnight, so I had better hide till then."

Turning down the light of his lantern, he crept under a counter and waited in silence for Reginald's return. The time seemed so long that once or twice he turned on the light to consult his watch, but at length he heard a key grate in the lock and someone entered.

A few minutes more and a dim light gleamed in the sale-room, and, peering from his concealment, Fennes saw Reginald Westcourt. The lad had lighted his lantern and was now engaged in removing his outer garments. When they had been deposited on the counter, he seated himself on a stool and gave himself up to melancholy reflection.

Fennes hardly dared to stir lest he should attract attention, but, at length, to his great joy, Reginald arose, took his lantern, and went upstairs. After waiting a little while, the clerk was about to emerge from his concealment when the lad returned with his bed, which he proceeded to arrange upon the counter.

The clerk watched this operation with amazement.

He had supposed that the lad had a fire and other comforts, and now wondered that he was deprived of them. He remembered how well Reginald had been treated in his occasional visits to the office, and that within two or three days the merchant had said that his nephew had become impoverished.

"I believe that's more of his villainy," he thought. "If he'd burn his own warehouse to get the insurance money, he'd rob his nephew. I wouldn't wonder if he were trying to kill the boy so as to inherit his property. I'll just keep an eye on Mr. Westcourt after to-night. If he's injuring that lad, I will find it out."

With this resolve, Fennes turned his thoughts to his own immediate affairs.

Reginald began to undress, noticed that the room seemed a little chillier than usual, and crept into bed but partially disrobed, soon falling asleep.

It was nearly midnight when the incendiary crept from his concealment and stood over the boy, listening if he slept soundly.

As he looked upon the lad before him, his own innocent, youthful days seemed to return, and he remembered when he was his father's pride and his mother's darling.

How he had changed since then!

Turning away from the boy, he returned to the back of the counter, and piled up his combustibles in

various places in such a way as to readily catch on the wooden counter itself or the walls.

He placed them behind the piles of rich silks on the high shelves, gathered papers and all other easily ignitable articles he could find, and arranged them in suitable places.

The silks he saturated in places with turpentine or camphine, and finally he removed the top of the lantern and was ready to finish his work.

And then he bestowed a thought upon Reginald. What if he should never awaken to his danger? What if he should be smothered? He would then be a murderer as well as incendiary!

He reassured himself with his employer's words. The cries of fire would awaken him, or some fireman would rescue him. He was partially dressed and could easily escape.

And then Fennes took his uncovered light and proceeded towards his largest pile of combustibles. As he lifted it, about to apply the fire, the sound of a church-bell striking the hour of midnight arrested his guilty arm.

What thoughts that sound brought to his soul! His father—his tender mother—his gentle Mary—it seemed to him that they all stood by his side at that moment, the dead with the living, uttering warning prayers.

"I wanted to be good, but he wouldn't let me," he involuntarily whispered.

His purpose wavered for a moment as the bell was echoed by other bells, all telling the hour of midnight, some of them with a far-away sepulchral sound, and some startlingly near.

But when they died on the air, he exclaimed: "Pshaw! I am frightened at shadows. To-morrow I'll think of Mary!"

Fearful lest his delusions should return, or his courage fail, he applied the light to the pile, going rapidly to another and another, until all were lighted, and long fiery tongues were to be seen on the walls and the counters. Then with sudden and awful terror, he dashed down his lantern into a heap of papers, and rushed to the door.

He opened it, darted out—and found himself in the grasp of a police officer.

"A thief, eh?" said the official. "Ah! What's this?"

The door swinging back a little had revealed to him a perfect den of fire within.

Fennes struggled frantically to free himself, but physically he was not very strong, although desperation gave him the momentary strength of a maniac. He would have inevitably have got away had not another policeman come opportunely to the assistance of his comrade.

The call of these brought more, and Wixon Fennes was soon carried away a prisoner.

Two of the policemen then penetrated a little way into the shop, far enough to note the extensive preparations of the incendiary, and see that the fire was the result of no accident, and they then retreated as a general cry of "Fire" rang out in the night.

In a few minutes fire-engines made their appearance, and loud demands were made if anyone slept in the building.

"A boy sleeps upstairs," cried one of the clerks of the house, who lived in the neighbourhood. "Mr. Westcourt's nephew is in the front room!"

All eyes were turned in that direction. So intent was everybody in watching the upper windows that no one noticed the white scarred face and boyish figure of Reginald, as half dressed, with a bundle of clothes hastily caught up in his arms, he glided through the doorway and mingled with the crowd.

So rapid was the progress of the fire within the building that by the time the ladders were put up, and the brave firemen had made a brief examination of the upper room, the flames began to render the flooring unsafe, and to issue from the upper windows.

"One of the beds is stripped of its clothing," reported one of the firemen. "The boy probably went down to sleep in a warmer room. It's too late to save him!"

A groan of commiseration arose from the crowd, which had grown very large.

There were the firemen whose duty it was to be there, policemen to keep order, the shivering poor, to whom even such a fire as that was welcome, thieves who hoped to gain something from the building, people brought there by curiosity, and pickpockets, who moved in and out among the latter class, plying their profession.

Outside the crowd, in the shadow of a door-way, wrapped in his great-coat, stood Reginald Westcourt, bewildered by his abrupt transition from pleasant slumbers to such a fearful scene.

He had been awakened by the shouts of the populace and the din of the engines, had found himself in the midst of roaring flames, and even in his terror

had instinctively seized his garments, which lay beside him, and rushed into the street.

That the firemen were looking for him he had not the slightest suspicion. He supposed he had been seen by someone, but gave no thought whatever to the subject. The one thing that occupied his mind was the fact that his only shelter was burning, and that his books and other treasures were irretrievably lost.

The wind was high and fierce, rendering it impossible to save any of the goods or valuables—even the account-books were being burned. In a short time but a shell remained, and then one side of that fell in, and the fire grew fainter, and was evidently yielding to the firemen.

It had early been seen to be impossible to save either the building or its contents, and every effort had been made to save the neighbouring buildings, many of which were, of course, in immediate danger, owing to the fierce wind, but happily, these escaped.

The crowd at length began to disperse, all except the poor homeless ones, to whom the door-ways and other nooks in the vicinity, lighted and warmed by the smouldering fire, presented tempting resting-places.

The clerk who had announced the fact that Reginald slept in the building had departed, horror-stricken and trembling, to inform his employer of his double loss—the burning of his goods and the supposed death of his nephew.

And Reginald himself, carried along by a portion of the crowd, found himself homeless and desolate.

He heard people discussing, in loud tones, the origin of the fire, declaring the guilty clerk worthy of his fate, even if it were an immediate hanging, and, without asking, he learned that the incendiary had been his uncle's clerk, and was now securely lodged in a prison-cell.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

THE manufacture of porcelain buttons is carried on to a large extent in France, one manufactory alone employing no less than 700 hands.

THE capacity of iron ships built on the six principal rivers of England, during 1865, amounted to 408,206 tons of new vessels.

THE wires of the Russian American telegraph have been extended a distance of 715 miles above New Westminster, in British Columbia.

THE researches of chemists on white of egg seem to prove that sulphur is not an essential constituent of the albumen, but it is contained in a volatile principle perfectly distinct.

THE tunnel under the Alps has reached 7,615 ft. in length on the French side and 11,285 ft. on the Italian. At the present rate of progress five years will be required to complete the work.

CHILLED SHOT.—The latest experiments have resulted in the determination to adopt chilled iron shot, and to do away with steel shot. There is no acid used, as stated, in the manufacture of the chilled shot, and no secret. The shot is simply cast into chilled iron moulds, and the shot becomes chilled and hardened by the contraction of the fibres of the iron.

ENORMOUS AEROLITE.—During the fall of aerolites which took place recently near Kaya-Hinya, Hungary, one of the enormous size of 560 lb. fell down with a terrible noise, and pierced the ground to a depth of nine feet. Its shape was triangular; it was mostly composed of iron, and now forms one of the many curiosities of the Imperial Geological Institute at Vienna.

ARTIFICIAL IVORY.—It is said that an artificial ivory is made in France from a paste of papier maché and gelatine. Billiard balls formed of this material, though barely a third of the price of those made from real ivory, are yet so durable and elastic that they can be thrown from the top of a house to the pavement, or violently struck with a hammer, without injury. With this same paste, to which the name of Parisian marble is given, among many other things, the finest and most complicated mouldings for ceilings can be made, or capitals of columns can be constructed in any colour so as to resemble the most valuable marbles.

CHEMICAL DISCOVERY.—In the course of his address to the chemical section, Dr. Benze Jones said:—"A most remarkable discovery has been made by the Master of the Mint on the absorption and dialytic separation of gases by colloidal septa; for example, he finds that mixed gases pass through India-rubber at different rates proportioned to their powers of liquefaction. The oxygen of atmospheric air passes through rapidly, whilst the nitrogen is comparatively stopped. The importance of this discovery in metallurgy, and its application to the physiology of respiration and of the passage of oxygen from the blood into

the textures, must be apparent to all. It seems but a few years ago when we were taught that the animal and vegetable kingdoms were composed of entirely different kinds of substances. Nitrogenous compounds were said to belong to the animal kingdom; and the vegetable kingdom was said to be formed of carbonaceous matters only. First starch, then woody fibre, then colouring matters like indigo, then alkaloids like quinine, were, one after the other, thought to distinguish the vegetable from the animal creation; and each of these substances, or their representatives, have at last been found in animals."

SUPERIORITY OF ENGLISH LOCOMOTIVES.—The Queensland Railway engines are built by the best English firms, and weigh only fifteen tons each; but, notwithstanding their lightness, they are fully equal to the work required, taking, as they do, a load of sixty tons up gradients of 1 in 40 at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, and on a level at double that speed.

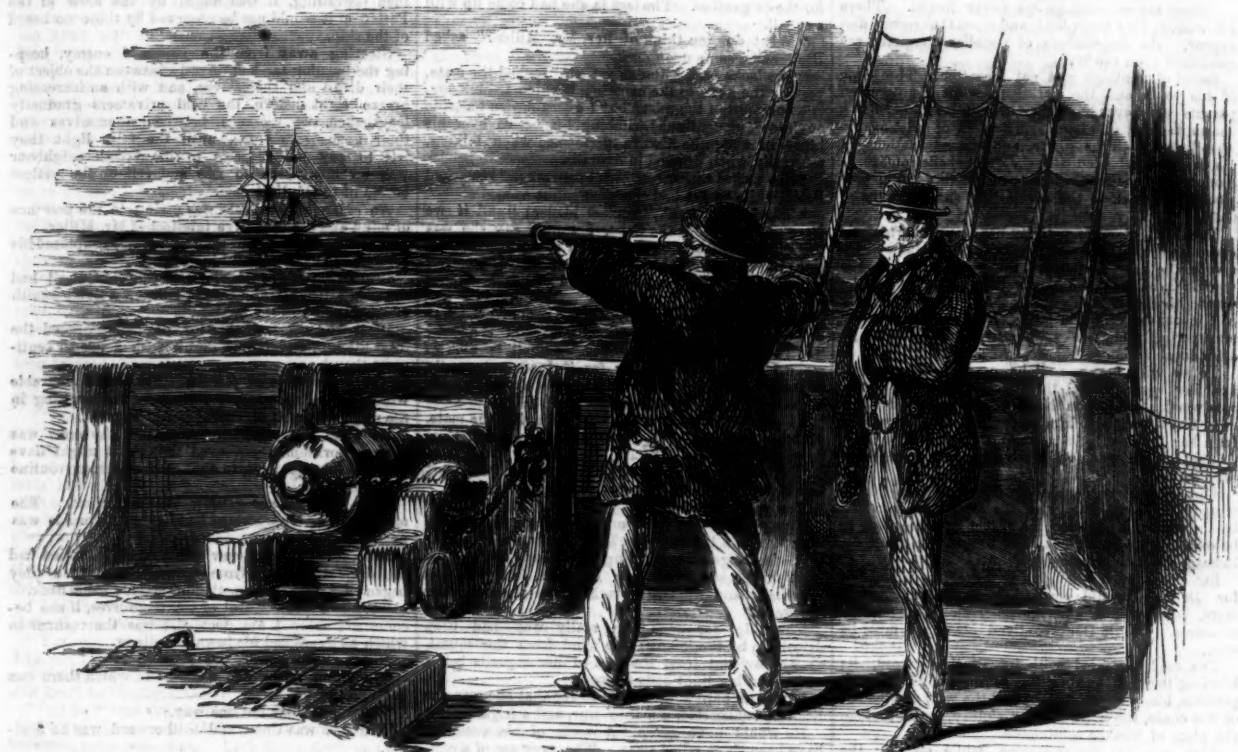
REMEDY FOR GANGRENE.—M. Boullard informs the French Academy that the leaves of the tea-tree pounded and applied to wounds and bruises, have a powerful action in the prevention and cure of gangrene. He removes mortified flesh, washes the wound in chlorinated water, and then applies a poultice of the leaves. He has used this remedy with success for fifteen years.

CHEMICAL PHENOMENON.—Fused acetate of soda, allowed to cool in the open air, crystallizes at 58 deg.; allowed to cool, however, in a limited amount of moist air, it does not crystallize even at zero, but becomes a soft translucent mass. If after having been so cooled it is exposed freely to dry air and touched with a dry solid body, it suddenly crystallizes and rises to the temperature of 58 deg. M. Jeannel remarks that this experiment shows how solar heat may be stored up and made to reappear at will.

UNDERGROUND PHENOMENON.—An Australian paper says, "It is a curious fact, connected with deep mining, that from the hours of twelve at night till three in the morning the disturbing influence in the bowels of the earth obtains increased activity. At that time it is observed by miners that water falls from places where none is observable during the day. The volume in the wheel is perceptibly increased, the atmosphere is charged with gases which often prevent the lights from burning, and small particles of earth and rock are observed to fall from the tops of the drives. Whether this phenomenon is to be attributed to the diurnal motion of the earth or other causes, it is worthy of the attention of the curious."

IRON ORE IN NEW ZEALAND.—A discovery of rich iron ore has been made in Ilfracombe, near Launceston, Tasmania, which is said to contain 72 per cent. of iron. If this be so it is superior to any in England, except the Cumberland hematite, which contains 60 per cent. of metallic iron. It resembles the rich Swedish ore, a portion of which is shipped to mix with the English ore. A general analysis is desirable. The ore at Lowmoor, Bradford, and Yorkshire, contains not more than 30 per cent. of metallic iron. The Cleveland, and other parts of Yorkshire, called the Pecten and Avicula bands, range from 28 to 33 per cent.; both these bands will be found below the Ilfracombe band, which is termed an Oolitic band.

THE NEW "THAMES TUNNEL."—Nearly parallel with the Charing Cross railway bridge, and a short distance above it, three large coffer-dams are being constructed in the Thames, which appear as if intended to enclose spaces for the piers of a new bridge. Such, however, is not their purpose. They are intended as adits from which a new tunnel is to be made under the river—not a construction of brick and mortar archways like the old tunnel, but one of large iron tubes. In these tubes, which will pass underground from Whitehall to Waterloo Road, a new line of railway, of a somewhat novel principle, will be carried—it will be novel, at least, as regards actual adaptation to passenger traffic, though a short line on the pneumatic principle was some time since added to the various attractions of the Crystal Palace, and we have now for a considerable period had tubes laid under some thoroughfares in which miniature trains are all day long conveying parcels backwards and forwards between the offices of the Pneumatic Despatch Company. It will be a new "sensation" to get into a train without any engine or motive power attached, and to be drawn from Whitehall to Waterloo Road through a tunnel by suction, or exhaustion of the air, performed by a stationary engine at the end of the line. But the thing is feasible enough, and will be done, now that contractors have got it in hand, and have actually driven their piles for carrying their tubes across the Thames. It will not be a long or an expensive operation, as there will be no positive tunnelling—only the digging of a trench, as it were, at the bottom of the stream to lay the tubes, in; and when this is done there will only be the water to pump out, and the tunnel will be finished.



[THE STRANGE FRIGATE.]

"SI, SENORITA, SI."

CHAPTER VIII.

WITH Isabel on her way to Mount Tarquina, and Delfosse (poor fellow!) *non est inventus*, let us awhile follow the footsteps of our hero. The Englishman was on his way to his home in England. The morning of his departure was cool and sweet, and the pilot was on board at an early hour. Before the sun had risen, the anchor was at the bows of the Templeton, and her canvas spread to the breeze, Delfosse having left.

Beall stood aft, on the quarter-deck, and in a voice tremulous and pathetic, exclaimed: "Isla de Cuba, adios!"

He could utter no more. Disappointment was depicted on his countenance, for it rankled in his heart.

Was he not leaving Cuba for ever? Should he ever behold the face of Delfosse again? Should he ever hear once more the voice of her before whom he had bowed in the most abject submission? Why had he permitted himself to become so warmly attached to one and so completely carried away with the other?

"Isabel, the beautiful Spanish girl, farewell! Live on in thy dark-eyed splendour! Shine on, thou sun of the tropics! Soon shall I be in a colder clime, far away from the reach of thy captivating charms! But, alas! I carry with me the seeds of a malady that I fear will make its appearance when no specific can be had, and I be left a prey to remorse and despair!"

Such were the painful thoughts of our hero as he stood for hours and watched the blue mountains until they grew misty in the distance, and nothing but their wavy outline could be seen stretching along the clouds.

Fragrant perfume came out after the vessel even when twenty miles of water intervened, and as it grew less and less perceptible, it seemed like severing the last tie that bound him to the land of his idol.

The day passed, night came on, and with it faded from view the lovely shore.

In a few days the schooner was anchored at Santa Cruz, a small town on the same coast, where she took in a cargo of molasses and sugar, and then again set sail for the Continent, going by the way of Cape Antonio and the Gulf.

We shall not follow the wandering course of the Templeton in her serpentine track through the ocean, neither shall we keep her log-book during the present

voyage; let it be sufficient to say that Beall reached the city in safety.

As Beall walked up South Street, towards the market, the wild cry of an infuriated mob, mingled with the sounds of firearms, assailed his ear.

He stopped for a moment, wondering what could be the matter. But upon seeing crowds of men running in that direction, he joined with them, and before being actually aware of his whereabouts, he was surrounded on all sides by an interminable mass of human beings, some throwing stones, some shouting at the top of their voices, and others firing pistols here and there in every direction, while the great body of men swayed and tossed about like the waves of the ocean.

Just beyond he could hear a stern voice, in a commanding tone, sounding above the common din, like peals of thunder in the storm. Presently a volley of musketry was discharged in the very midst of the rioters.

Then came a wild shout, more awful than anything he had heard before, and the words "Lingan is killed" were borne from one to another with electric speed.

He now began to feel exceedingly unlucky in suffering himself to become thus hemmed in within the very vortex of destruction; and using all his presence of mind as well as physical energy, he succeeded in extricating himself in part from the pressure of the throng.

But what on earth could give such a shock to his nerves as to behold, on getting to the outside, his own father borne along by four men in a state of syncope, his face pale as death itself, and a small stream of dark blood oozing out of a frightful wound on the left side of his head?

With a wild bound, and a wilder yell, the young man sprang forwards, and stopping the men, prostrated himself upon the body of his dying sire.

Life was not quite extinct, it is true, but reason was gone; and the blue eyes that had so often looked with paternal love into the soul of the son were already covered with the film of death, and ere they reached that home, so late the dwelling-place of peace, but now destined to become a house of mourning, the lamp of life had expired.

Grief not to be allayed from any source, connected with a declining constitution, brought the mother in four short weeks by the side of the father, and Beall was left alone in the world.

There had been a sister; but when quite a child, not more than five years old, through the carelessness of her nurse, she had strayed away from the house and perished, her little body being found, as

was supposed, in a dirty alley, so bruised and mangled as not to be recognized.

A public ceremony followed the burial of the unfortunate parent; and the son and only heir being on the verge of manhood, took entire control of his father's heavy estate.

Such a flood of wealth upon some young men would have proved a speedy ruin; but the training of our hero had not been neglected; and although his disposition was erratic in the extreme, and all his actions precipitate, yet his breeding had been good, and his religious impressions too strong to permit him to give himself up to dissipation and debauchery.

That his conduct in Cuba was not faultless must be admitted; still, that all the generous impulses that human nature can boast of were observable beneath the wild, dashing spirit of his youth, cannot be denied.

In the meantime, there were events developing themselves day by day, and hour by hour, well calculated to call into activity such minds as that of Beall.

There was lying at a certain shipyard in the lower part of the city, near what is known as Fell's Point, a beautiful brigantine of the before-mentioned build, which was for sale.

She had formerly been running to the coast of Africa; and on account of her fast sailing and good luck had eluded the cruisers, and brought her owners untold wealth. There was no vessel better suited for a privateer than the William G. Patterson, for such was her name. She was four hundred tons burden, with a draught of fourteen feet, and a spread of canvas almost equal to a frigate.

Her yards were long and tapering, her masts tall and rakish, her bow straight and sharp, and her rigging newly run and strong.

From stem to stern she measured one hundred and twenty feet.

She had formerly had two decks while a slaver; but, with a view to the part that she was probably to perform in the sanguinary struggle just intimated, one had been taken off, her bulwarks cut down, and from her heretofore useless ports two twelve-pounders might be seen, and forward of the foremast, on a pivot, was a long brass piece, of extraordinary range and power.

The hull of the vessel, though ten years old, was sound and staunch, and her bottom tight and smooth.

This brigantine was purchased on the day of sale by James Magruder Beall, for the sum of five thousand sovereigns; and a few days after, having in his possession letters of marque, with a good crew, he set sail.

CHAPTER IX.

THERE are some things we never forget. There are wounds that never heal, and scars that never disappear. So impressions of peculiar character are cicatrized upon the brain.

Isabel of Santiago was not forgotten. The home of his youth and the resting-place of his deceased parents must ever be revered, but it no longer had a charm to bind our hero. The ties of relationship were linked with the grave, and the associations of the past were blended with the quiet shades of Greenmount, while the strongest of earthly influences wooed him back to the everlasting summer suns of Cuba.

The land of one's nativity has many charms. It exerts a spell not to be easily broken; but the land where dwells the heart's adored is the best country in the world; Cuba was the soul's home of Beall—Cuba was in his thoughts, his dreams, his conversations.

The canvas of the artist never pictured a shadow more perfectly, nor was ever engraved on steel an image more durable than Isabel.

To be with her was all he craved. To see her, hear her speak, to feel the touch of her soft hand, was worth more to him than food, drink, or air.

In fact it seemed to him he could not live separated from her.

The passion was ever increasing. Already it was illimitable.

The fathomless depths of the gulph might be measured, the mountains of the earth weighed in a balance, but his affection for Isabel was too deep to be sounded, too ponderous to be weighed, of a magnitude too great to be estimated.

But amidst such thoughts as these his friendship for Delfosse would come before him, and, as it were, between him and the possession of countless treasures. While Delfosse lived his hopes must be vain.

The sea! the sea! with its floating wood, its howling tempest, and rolling billow, should tame, if possible, his wayward spirit; and the wild excitement of the chase, the fight and the victory, ought to take the place of weaker sentiments.

Such was his determination while striding the quarter-deck of the Patterson.

Long, low, and raking, skimming with a light breeze behind her, with her topsail and top-gallant sail loose, but not sheeted home, she was the perfect picture of a clipper brigantine.

Beall, though young and beardless, looked very much like a commander, as, with measured pace, he walked to and fro, and watched the active sailors as they leaped from spar to spar and from rope to rope at the command of the first mate, who acted both as mate and master.

All hands were called on deck, and the watches divided and set. The crew consisted of twelve men before the mast, a cook, two mates, and an assistant navigator.

There was no surplussage of men. He had just the number he wanted, and no more; and those he had were picked to suit his purpose.

Besides the prospect of a share in the prize-money, our hero paid them well in advance; and this, with grog three times a day, was enough for any tar.

The wind came out fresh from the north, and with royals set, the Patterson sped like an arrow down the bay.

In twenty-four hours she was outside.

It was the intention of Beall to cruise in the neighbourhood of the West Indies; consequently, he steered a south-south-east course, and in twelve hours from the time he passed Cape Henry, he was in the Gulf Stream.

They were now nearing those latitudes where the coast winds cease and the trades commence. The first watch had been relieved, and midnight was past.

The west wind had died away to a mere breath, and over the lakelike sea a slight mist had fallen; while from the distant vault of heaven the stars looked down as through a veil on the tranquil scene below.

Far away in the south-east a thunder-storm was raging.

Terrific explosions, like the quick reports of distant artillery, shook the slumbering water, and lightning ever and anon flashed against the white canvas of the brigantine.

The heavy spars creaked on the masts, and the dangling reef-points struck against the loose sails, making a noise like hailstones on a soldier's tent.

The squall was travelling towards the north and east, and would not so much as ruffle a billow within a mile of the Patterson.

At sunset, Beall had scanned with his glass the entire horizon, and satisfied himself that there was not a sail in sight.

He was therefore not a little surprised to be called from his comfortable berth at half-past one o'clock

by Mr. Miller, the mate, to take notice of a stranger then bearing east-south-east, and apparently standing for the brigantine. The fact is, she had come up with a squall.

"What do you think of her, Mr. Miller?" asked Beall, as he came upon deck.

"She looks pretty dim as yet, sir," replied the mate, passing the glass to the captain; "which I think, sir, is on account of the mist; but I guess she isn't a trifle anyhow," he continued, rubbing his hands over his hips—an action he always performed when talking, especially when dressed in overalls.

"She makes rather a sudden appearance," remarked Beall, while he yet had the glass to his eye.

"That's a fact, sir," replied Miller; "and if we were cruising about the Cape, I should say she was the Flying Dutchman at once; for if she didn't drop right down out of that cloud there, that's gone off growing to the eastward, like an old shellback without his upper."

"I think she's a ship, Mr. Miller," resumed Beall, as if he had not heard the comical remark of the mate, "and a man-o'-war. However, we shall be able to make her out before long; for, if I am not greatly mistaken, she is heading this way, and seems to have a breeze."

"I'm much of your mind, sir," chimed in the mate, rubbing his hips. "Is there anything you'll have done, sir?"

"Nothing now," replied Beall; "only call the star-board watch, and see that everyone keeps quiet."

The watch was called.

The strange sail was now within a few cables' length of the brigantine. The wind was at north-east—the brigantine standing on the larboard and the other on the starboard tack. The air, however, was very light, and the two vessels scarcely moved over the water.

The ship—for such she really was—had been driven up by the force of the wind from the squall, as was evident from the fact of her topsails being reefed and her light sails stowed.

It was no hard matter now to see that she was, as Beall had suspected, a man-o'-war, and a frigate.

He would have given the worth of his vessel to have been three miles away. The prospect of a capture so soon, coupled with the horrors of a prison, were enough to excite him.

But what could he do? Nothing. Submission, if indeed she were an enemy, was the only alternative.

Turning to Miller, he asked, with a forced smile, what he thought of the situation.

"It looks bad, captain, but there may be such a thing as getting clear, after all. Just you give the whole concern up to me."

Mr. Miller was a man who understood his trade, and Beall very readily assented to the proposal, knowing at the same time that a little condescension on his part would have no effect in ruining the sterling qualities of his mate.

"Stand by to answer," said Beall, excitedly, as a trumpet voice, hoarse as that of Neptune, shouted:

"Brig ahoy! What vessel is that?"

"The Spanish brig Renio," replied Mr. Miller, in the Spanish tongue.

"What do you say?" vociferated the speaker.

"The Spanish brig Renio," was again the response, as before.

"How is it that you can understand us and can't reply?" hallooed the Englishman.

"The Spanish brig Renio," was once more the cry of Mr. Miller.

The vessels were now very near each other. Fortunately, a sailor on board the ship interpreted for the hailing officer, saying:

"He says she is the Spanish brig Renio, sir."

"Heave to until morning," was shouted in Spanish from the ship, as she hauled up close to the wind in order to clear the brigantine.

"Aye, aye," was the response from Mr. Miller, as he gave the command, "Hard!" up to the man at the wheel, that he might get room to throw his topsail aback.

"Put up a light," was commanded from the man-o'-war.

Mr. Miller answered as before. In a few minutes a globe lamp was swinging in the fore-rigging, and the brig thrown to the wind was almost stationary, while the ship was gaining considerably to the windward.

Half an hour had passed since the brig was spoken. In that time her mate had not been idle.

A small raft with a slight mast had been constructed, and in this was fixed a tar-keg, ready to be set on fire when the ship should be out of sight.

Watching for, and making use of the first favourable opportunity, with the help of the crew, Mr. Miller cast his raft into the sea, while Beall extinguished the light in the rigging.

The tar-keg gave a very good light. It was not

elevated as high as the globe in the rigging, but as this was a small matter, owing to the slight fog then prevailing, it was hoped by the crew of the Patterson it would not be observed by those on board of the ship.

Steering away from the supposed enemy, keeping the burning tar-keg directly between the object of their dread and themselves, and with an increasing breeze right astern, the bold privateers gradually lengthened the distance between themselves and their unsuspecting foe, until the false light they left to pay his respects to his allied neighbour was no more seen to rise and fall on the restless bosom of the Gulf Stream.

An escape so fortunate was owing to the presence of mind and the inventive intellect of Mr. Miller.

Our hero felt satisfied that he had not misplaced his confidence or misjudged his man.

When well out of the reach of the ship, Beall had the men called aft, and they all drank a lively health to Mr. Miller and the tar-keg.

Beall was not jealous; for he had proposed the toast himself, and no one drank with a deeper sentiment than he.

Not many days of fair weather and favourable winds elapsed before the Patterson was cruising in the neighbourhood of Turks' Island Passage.

No prize had yet been taken, and the crew was anxious for something, even though it might have a dash of danger in it, to change the tiresome routine of ship life.

Beall himself was getting very impatient. The main purpose for which he had begun his cruise was not answered as yet.

For a few days, the new duties of his situation had called his mind away from Santiago, but when they began to grow common, the old malady came back.

"While I know Isabel of Santiago lives, if she become not mine I am doomed," was the manner in which he expressed his inward feelings.

He was lonesome.

The great ocean was a desert in which there was but one oasis.

The winds blew but one way.

The oasis was Cuba, and thitherward was he floating.

Every passing cloud, tinged with the citron and gold of the tropics, drifted southward; and, indeed, it seemed to him that the Gulf Stream had reversed its current and gone eddying towards the Equator.

One day at noon, after the affairs of the nautical day had been wound up, the position of the brig ascertained, their courses shaped, he threw himself on his mattress, and giving vent to a deep sigh, addressed Mr. Miller, who was also below, figuring up his dead-reckoning and quadrant-work:

"Miller, old fellow, I'm badly off."

"How so, captain?" inquired the quick little mate, closing his double-plate and turning towards Beall, rubbing his hip with one hand.

"Why, the deuce of it is, I'm in love and can't get out."

"That's a bad predicament, captain, as the fox said that had got his tail fast in a gin. It's a hard knot that love ties, I assure you, sir; but I never got my hamper so foul yet in the gear of a woman that I could not get it out. Out and run, captain—it's the best remedy."

"But Mr. Miller, did you never hear tell of being haunted?"

"Haunted, sir? Yes, sir. Jack Merryweather used to tell a long yarn in the fore-castle, when I went before the mast, how that he served a young lady like he oughtn't to—promised to marry her and the like, and then left her, and she went away from her home because he had ruined her, and she died, and Jack used to say that she haunted him night and day. And I sailed with another man. I never knew what that fellow done, but he used to wake up in his sleep and whoop like as if the evil one was after him; and whenever he would rise in that state, it would take six men to hold him. He used to say somebody was after him with a red-hot iron. Everybody said he was haunted. And I sailed with another man that was haunted. And one night, when we were off the coast of Florida, homeward bound from the Spanish main—in a thunder-quall, when the darkness was thicker than a Newfoundland fog, and you might have reached out your hand and caught the lightning as you lay upon the yardarm, and the rain and hail poured down at such a rate that it tore the crown right out of our tarpanlines—this fellow (his name was Harry) was next to me, and I was at the weather side—and every time it lightened, and I believe it lightened for every minute, this fellow would say:

"Oh, heaven! he's come after me!"

"Who, says I, 'is come after you?'"

"Hiss, hiss, the lightning would dart within ten feet of our heads; the ship would reel to leeward; up we'd go to the very clouds, and 'Oh, heavens! he's come after me!' would come from Harry."

"For heaven's sake!" says I, feeling none too well myself. "Harry, what's the matter with you?"

"I could see the whites of his eyes now and then, just as plain as I see you, and he looked awful bad in the light, with his hair all wet and streaming back like wild, and his face as pale as a corpse. His mouth was white with foam, and his breath was short and quick. It was such a continued roar and rattle that you couldn't tell when it thundered or when it didn't, and the gale whistled so hoarse, and made such piercing moans in the rigging, that if ever anybody thought anything about spirits or the spirit world, he'd a done it then. I looked close about me on every side. I couldn't see anything, it's true, but I felt as if something supernatural might be about. In the meantime, the gale, if possible, grew worse and worse. The tall masts bent like whip-staffs, and the canvas, tearing from our grasp, was lashed into shreds. The ship broadsided to, finally, and fell on her beam ends. We clung to the almost perpendicular yard, with the grip of death. I say, sir, it was a most awful time. For a few seconds there was a gloom, deep, dark, and horrid. Then, sir, the lightning tracked along the fore-spars and down the fore-rigging like a hundred serpents. A deafening peal of thunder followed! I shut my eyes.

"Oh, heaven! I'm gone!" screamed Harry, and catching at me, he fell, carrying my slipper with him.

"A second flash of lightning wrapped the ocean in a sheet of flame, and opening my eyes, I instinctively looked down to the water; and there, with his arms extended, his pale face thrown back to the angry sky, and his eyeballs rolling in their sockets, was poor Harry, sinking to rise no more. I tell you what, Captain Beall, that was an awful time," said Mr. Miller, rubbing both hips now, and perspiring under the excitement of the story.

"And that was all because he treated some woman badly?" remarked Beall.

"Yes, sir; if he were haunted at all, it was for that. And, sir, I think he were."

"Heaven save us from all such visitations as that!" said Beall, half serious, half in jest.

"Sail ho!" was the cry from the deck.

"Put by the slate, Mr. Miller; we'll finish our conversation some other time. Let's go on deck, and see if we can't make something out of that vessel that's hove in sight."

"Aye, aye," replied the little mate, putting up his tools and following Beall.

(To be continued.)

VEZUVIUS, which has for the last month been throwing up sheets of flame and smoke, has now subsided into "a dormant tranquillity."

In the Louvre collection there are pictures by the following artists:—Italian: 12 by Raphael, 3 Correggio, 18 Titians, 22 Albano, 13 Paul Veronese, 19 Leonardo di Vinci, 8 Perugino, and 4 by Giorgione. Of Spanish: 11 by Murillo, and 6 by Velasquez. Of the French: 40 by Poussin, 16 Claude Lorraine, 26 Lebrun, 1 Watteau, 13 by David, and several others less known. Of the Dutch and Flemish there are 42 by Rubens, 22 Vandyke, 11 Gerard Dow, 17 Rembrandt, 11 Wouvermans, 14 Teniers, 7 Adrien Ostade, 6 Ruysdael, 2 Hobbins, 11 Berghem, 10 Van Huisum, and 3 by Lucas de Leydes. In all, 2,000 pictures.

A QUEEN WILL.—A bachelor, named Curtis, living in Blackburn, forty years ago, made a will, bequeathing his property, to the value of about £500, to his three brothers, all bachelors, and a spinster sister, in the following proportions:—"Two-thirds" of his money to his eldest brother, "one-third" to his second brother, and "the remainder" (?) to his youngest brother. His sister, who was about to be married, he "cut off with a shilling." At this time he was only forty, but the solicitor made for him a proper will. A few weeks after the matter was settled, when he was walking across an iron-foundry yard, a bundle of iron fell from a hoist and killed him on the spot. The other brothers all died shortly afterwards, and the youngest left the property to the old woman who had been his nurse. She was asthmatic and weak, and a speculative person bought her interest in the property for a yearly annuity. The old woman improved in health, and the speculator had to pay the annuity for thirty-five years, amounting to more than twice the principal.

NEW EXPLOSIVE POWDER.—A Swiss inventor, adding to the numerous recent discoveries of new appliances of war, has discovered an explosive compound, consisting of a powder, the ingredients of which are as yet unknown. This powder is intended to be used only as a bursting charge for shell or for explosive rifle-bullets; in fact, it can be used as a charge for every species of projectile, and its force is so great that a bullet charged with it, and fired from the ordinary Enfield rifle, suffices to blow up the caisson of an artillery wagon. Although possessing

such formidable explosive qualities, this composition is, in its ordinary condition, one of the safest known, as it only explodes when the hollow projectile charged with it strikes some object when fired from a rifle or piece of ordnance; even then the shell does not burst till it has penetrated the substance against which it strikes. A bullet charged with this substance can be flung about and struck without any explosion resulting from the roughest treatment; upon being thrown into a fire the bullet will be fused, and no explosion ensue. The mode of using it is extremely simple, as it is merely poured into the shell till it is well filled with it, and the orifice through which it is introduced is then stopped up in the manner that seems most convenient—in the case of a rifle bullet, for instance, with a piece of sealing-wax. No fuse is required to determine the ignition of the shell. One of its most important qualities, however, is that by adding to or diminishing one of the ingredients, the explosion of the shell, after striking, may be retarded or accelerated, so that in firing, we shall say at an iron-plated ship-of-war, it may be so arranged as to explode either between decks after having penetrated the side, or in the side of the vessel itself, and the breach made by such a formidable mine would most probably utterly destroy or sink the vessel.

OUR BOARDER.

"Now, Sarah, let us hear what this new plan of yours is. It seems to be one of more than common importance, and so I have waited till this leisure time to hear it. Come. I am all ears."

This was spoken by Lyman Goodwin, a young man who had been married some three years. He was a clerk in a large house, and receiving a fair salary, and with this salary he had managed to support a comfortable home, and lay up something towards a fund which he was accumulating for the purpose of setting himself up in business.

"Well, Lyman," commenced the young wife, speaking in a hesitating manner, "I will tell you. I have been thinking of taking in a boarder."

"A what?" asked the husband, elevating his eyebrows.

"A boarder," repeated Sarah, gaining courage now that the ice was broken. "There is Mr. Totherly—you know him?"

"Crampton's old clerk?"

"Yes."

"To be sure, I know him, and he is a good, honest fellow."

"Well, he wants to get a good quiet boarding-place, and if he can have a room to himself in a private family he is willing to pay a pound a week. Now you know we have two spare rooms—one of them he could have, and the other we can keep for our friends. Only think—a pound a week. I shouldn't have to call on you for any pin-money, and I could make enough to clothe little Freddy besides."

And as she spoke she placed her hand upon the head of a bright-eyed little boy who sat by her side. She felt proud of that boy, for it was her only child.

"Only think," she continued, "how handy it will be. He will pay me a pound every Saturday night, and then I shall be able to help you a good deal."

"Yes," returned the husband, with a doubtful look upon his features, "I can see a part of what you say, but I don't think you have given the subject a fair thought."

"Yes, I have. I have looked at the matter in all its bearings, and I know."

"But you must be aware that your boarder will entail additional expenses upon me in the way of provisions."

"Ah, there you are at fault, my dear husband. We are obliged now to waste a great deal which would be saved if we had one more in the family. To be sure, we should use a little more, but not enough to cost a tenth part of what he will pay us. There is Mrs. Jones, she keeps a boarder, and gets only ten shillings, and yet she tells me she makes money."

"Ah, but you are not Mrs. Jones, my dear wife. She is one of those who sees a penny in every bit of waste, and who clings to a shilling as you do to your child. Besides, the Joneses do not indulge in the little luxuries that we do."

"Well, perhaps they don't, but then we can dispense with some of the luxuries we now enjoy, if you wish."

"If I wish? No, no, my dear wife; I don't wish anything of the kind. If we have another member in the family we must live as we live, nor should I be willing to deprive myself of any privileges on his account. But there is another inconvenience to which a boarder will subject us. We cannot be so

perfectly free in our social intercourse. In fact, he will change the whole aspect of our home."

"Oh, no," replied Mrs. Goodwin, who was determined not to be conquered in the argument, when once she had entered into it. "Everything that is proper to say we can say before Mr. Totherly. To be sure, we shall have to give up some of our silly, love-sick nonsense, but that is nothing."

At first Mr. Goodwin was a little touched at this last expression, but he did not show it. He was in the habit of playing and prattling with his wife, and of talking a vast deal of what outsiders would call nonsense, but it was all the legitimate offspring of his love, and he enjoyed it.

"But," continued the wife, "all that amounts to nothing. You know you want to get into business as soon as you can, and I know that this will help us. I shall not have to call upon you for money at all, not even to clothe myself or the boy, and of course I shall have money sometimes to hand over to you."

"Well," said the husband, after a few moments of reflection, "you can make the experiment if you wish; but I don't think it will amount to any benefit. To be sure, I am anxious to get into business for myself, but I do not wish to sacrifice any of my home comforts to do it, for I can do it without that in a very few years."

"You just wait and see," confidently returned Sarah. "You shall find that no comforts will be lost."

"Very well. We will see."

On the next Saturday evening Mr. Totherly came. He was a middle-aged man, and a gentleman in every sense of the word.

Lyman knew this, or he would not have had him at all.

Saturday evening passed off very pleasantly, for Mr. Goodwin and the "boarder" enjoyed a pleasing and profitable conversation.

Sunday also passed off well, for that was a day on which Mr. Goodwin thought only of rest, reading, and devotion.

On Monday morning, as Lyman started to go to the office his wife called him back.

"Lyman," she said, "you had better send up a nice piece of meat this morning."

"What meat on Monday? I thought you always 'picked up a dinner' on a washing day."

"Yes, but then you know our boarder may not like such fare."

"Ah, yes, I forgot our boarder." And with this remark Mr. Goodwin went his way.

The meat was sent up and the young husband paid for it, which sum he entered in a little book which he carried in his pocket.

When evening came Mr. Goodwin found an extra article upon the table in the shape of raspberry jam. He had always been in the habit of having the nice, plain sauce which his wife had made with her own hands, and he not only liked it, but he thought it more simple and healthy.

After supper he found that Sarah had bought the jam "because our boarder had been used to such things." So he had the pleasure of putting down another shilling in his book.

In the course of a few days the novelty of Mr. Totherly's presence had worn off, and things began to appear more in their true light.

The playful pranks of little Freddy, which had always been a source of joy and pleasure to his parents, now became annoying.

Both the father and mother felt anxious when the little fellow pulled at the table-cloth, and when he laughed and screamed in his playful delight, and when he drummed with his spoon upon the table. "The boarder" was not used to such things, and the poor parents feared he would think their child alarmingly ill-mannered.

There was another thing, too, which Mrs. Goodwin began to see as her husband had at first presented it. All those little words of fondness and endearment which had been wont to pass between them had to be given up, for "the boarder" would think them "soft" and sickening.

Lyman could not like his wife when he first returned from his business, for "the boarder" always came with him, and he could not kiss her when he went away, for the same presence was by his side.

"Never mind," said Sarah, when Saturday night came, and she showed her husband the pound, "we shall soon get used to it, and then we shall gain by it. Now I can get a new dress, and buy Freddy some shoes and a hat, and all without calling on you."

"Yes, I see," returned Lyman, with a dubious look.

And then he pulled out his little book, and pointed to a column of figures which amounted to five-and-thirty shillings.

"What is that?" asked Sarah.

"Only the extra cost of 'our boarder,' that is all."

"But you have not paid out all that?" said the wife, opening her eyes.

"Yes, every penny."

"Oh, yes, but it has been the cost for the whole family."

"No, the extra cost for Mr. Totherly. There was on Monday five shillings and tenpence for meat which we should not have had if he had not been here. Next, raspberry jam. Next comes breakfast for breakfast, instead of the simple baker's roll and coffee which we used to have, and which answered every purpose."

"Ah, but this is the first week, you know. Wait till we get settled."

"Till we get unsettled, you mean."

Mr. Goodwin had just made this ungallant remark when "the boarder" came in, and so the subject was dropped.

In the course of the evening Mr. Goodwin wanted his wife to join him in singing some of their hymns and songs, but she could not think of singing before her boarder, so the anticipated pleasure was lost.

Thus matters went on for several weeks.

One day when Mr. Goodwin came home he saw that his wife had a new brooch, and a new pair of ear-rings, and soon as he had an opportunity he asked her where she obtained them.

"Oh," she replied, "I bought these with my own money. Ain't they pretty?"

"Very pretty," was the laconic reply. "But come here and sit down. I want to show you my little book."

Sarah went and sat down, and her husband opened his book.

"Now," said he, "let us see how much we have cleared by 'our boarder.' He has been here now six weeks, and I have kept a regular account of all that I have bought. I make out that I have paid twenty-five shillings per week for the pleasure of his company."

"Oh, not that," uttered Mrs. Goodwin, in alarm.

"Yes. Just think of what our dinners cost us. Before, you know, we lived just as we had a mind to. Our simple luxuries that were have now become expensive. We must have meat often, new bread always, and more than enough, too, or it will look as though it were stingy. But that is nothing compared with the home comforts we have sacrificed. We cannot really enjoy each other's society, and our darling child is often more of a plague than a treasure."

"But I have not been extravagant," said Sarah.

"No, I know you have not, more so than you could help; but yet you have thrown all the burden on my shoulders. You have earned your spending-money and clothing-money, I know, and you have worked for it, but it has all come out of my pocket, every penny of it. Ah, Sarah, I am afraid 'our boarder' is anything but a source of profit. People will not put up with the same fare in a boarding-house that they will in their own house. It is natural. I should not be contented with the same at a boarding-place that satisfies me at home. I know that a great many young married people think that one or two boarders would be profitable, but it is not so. If a person make a business of it, and understands it, and gets boarders enough at fair prices, then it may pay, but not otherwise."

"But there is Mrs. Thurlow, she was married just about when we were. She has two boarders, and she told me that she cleared more than a pound a week."

"Yes, very likely; and I will tell you how it is, Sarah. Jack Thurlow is one of your open-hearted, don't-care fellows, and every penny he has left after he has paid his weekly bills goes for sport and nonsense. He earns most excellent wages at his business, and his wife has taken this means to save some of his money. She knows he will pay all his bills, and she hopes to make him lay up money in spite of himself. But he would do better to keep his own purse if he would only look ahead as I do."

Sarah saw the truth of what her husband had said, but before she could make any reply "the boarder" entered the apartment, and their social converse was ended.

On the following Saturday afternoon Mr. Goodwin's sister and her husband called at the office. Her husband was brother to Sarah, for Lyman and his sister had married into the same family—the one finding a wife and the other a husband. These friends had not visited him before for more than a year, and Lyman was fairly beside himself with joy when he saw them. He embraced his sister Lucy most affectionately, and the grasp which he gave his doubly-made brother-in-law was not to be mistaken in its warmth of fervent friendship.

At an early hour Lyman left to accompany his dear friends to his house, for they had come to make him a regular family visit, and he wished to enjoy the meet of it.

"Say, Lyman, what on earth makes you so serious?" asked Lucy, on her way.

"Serious?" returned the young man; "what do you mean?"

"Now, none of that," cried his sister, with a laugh; "but tell us what makes you so sober. I know you are sorry we have come."

"None of that."

"Then tell us what ails you. You are as serious as though you had lost every friend on earth."

Lyman hesitated a moment, and then, with a light laugh, he replied:

"Well, Lucy, I'll tell you. The truth is, my wife has taken 'a boarder,' and I could not help thinking how much his presence will detract from our enjoyment."

"Just like her," broke in Lucy's husband. "I've no doubt she thought she was going to work wonders with the pay of 'a boarder.'"

"Exactly," said Lyman.

"She was always so," returned the other, "always from a child. But she will confess if you can make her see her errors."

Considerable merriment ensued on the subject of "the boarder," and in due time the party reached the house.

Sarah was in raptures at seeing her brother and his wife, and she fairly wept with joy as she hung about their necks.

All the important news was told, and then Sarah started to prepare supper, upon which errand, of course, Lucy accompanied her.

Ere long supper was announced, and the happy party sat down. There was a cloud upon Lyman's brow as he entered the eating-room, but it changed to an inquiring look as he took his seat.

"Sarah, where is Mr. Totherly?"

"Gone," replied Sarah.

"Gone? Not for good?"

"Yes."

"And won't he come back?" cried Lyman, dropping his knife.

"No. I told him last Monday that we could keep him only this week, and he has found another place."

"Blessings on your head," cried the happy man, springing from the chair and placing an alarming kiss upon his wife's cheeks.

"Hurrah! Upon my soul we'll have comfort yet. Now, sister, and you too, brother, prepare for enjoyment, for I am the happiest man alive."

And so he was. He enjoyed the visit of his friends and when they were gone he once more enjoyed the society of his wife and child. Sarah has never since wanted another boarder, for she has found that speculative saving may be, after all, operative losing, and that the true joys of home are worth all the care and enterprize of a wife.

A. C. B.

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN the prisoner left the apartment in which the prince and his uncle sat, the younger man laid down his paper and impatiently said:

"That wretch is as impracticable as ever. The falsehoods that man has told are incredible. He has assumed as many forms as Proteus himself, and hitherto he has always managed to get the better of those sent in pursuit of him. Now that he has me to deal with, however, he shall find that it is safer to trifle with an enraged lion than with such a man as I am. He shall never escape from me save by death, with this secret in his possession."

Baron Ardeheim again convulsed his fat sides with laughter before he replied:

"My dear Ernest, you are a regular firebrand. What was the use of threatening that poor fellow with torture and half scaring the life out of him? If you had only left him to me, I flatter myself that I could have squeezed the orange dry without all that bluster, which failed to gain its object after all."

"You are quite mistaken, uncle. In solitude the memory of my words will produce a salutary effect. Hitherto Ledra has had to deal only with underlings, who, having less at stake in this affair than I have, permitted his cunning to be more than a match for theirs. But now that he has been brought face to face with myself, he will soon begin to understand that his only chance of escape is to surrender the child to my mercy. If he found it easy to evade others—"

"Easy!" interrupted the baron, with another fat chuckle. "Pon my life, nephew, I do not know what is hard if the life this poor fellow has led for the last few years is not so. He has been entrapped again and again. Once he was sent to Siberia, but escaped by managing to get an appeal made to the Czarina, through his patroness, the Duchess of Lindorf, I suppose. You were notified that the man was again at large, and had taken refuge in Italy. Through your trusty agent, Brauner, whose scent was as staunch as

that of a bloodhound, you again nabbed him. This time he was turned over to the tender mercies of the Inquisition, but still refused to betray his trust. Again the duchess interfered, and he was permitted to evade his jailers, only to be seized on by the indefatigable Brauner and taken to South America, where he was sent as a convict to the diamond mines, with a keeper over him, who nightly asked him—'Where is the child?' and offered him freedom and wealth in exchange for the secret of her asylum. But it was never wrung from him, nephew, nor do I believe it will ever be gained by brute force. *Finesse*, Ernest, *finesse* is the thing to use with such a man as this Ledru."

The prince impatiently listened to this recapitulation of the persecutions which had driven the hapless Ledru to suicide, and he replied, with indomitable resolution vibrating in every tone of his voice:

"He shall speak the truth now, or his wretched life shall be the forfeit of his obstinacy. What! do you suppose that I will be baffled when so much is at stake? My uncle cannot live much longer, and at his death this girl shall never be produced to defraud me of my brilliant future. This petty principality is insignificant when compared with the inheritance I must derive from the Elector; with the two united under one ruler, I shall be one of the most important men of the empire. The Emperor will probably give me a high position near his person, and with the large fortune I expect with the Countess of Guildernstern, I can rival in splendour the greatest lords in the state."

The baron nodded his head approvingly and said:

"Good—good. I hope you may realize it all; but if you find out where the child is secreted, what do you intend to do with her? The Elector cannot disinherit her in your favour, for the succession is strictly entailed, and a female heir is as eligible as a male."

"I already know all you can tell me on that subject, and it surprises me that a man of your shrewdness cannot see the necessity of removing the heiress so effectually that no claim can ever be set forth in her favour."

The sanguine hue of the baron's face changed slightly, and he asked:

"Will you really justify the fears of the duchess by making away with her daughter should she fall into your power through the weakness of this man?"

Prince Ernest stared at his uncle as if he did not quite comprehend the meaning of his words, and he contemptuously asked:

"Why, what would you have me do? Have you for an instant supposed that I would risk everything by letting Irene live to thrust me from my place at some future day? Others have been dealt with before her, and her life is not more valuable than their lives were. Her brothers were fine children, but they perished in convulsions after a few hours' illness, and the Baron of Ardeheim knows whose skill produced that result, yet he talks now as if he shrinks from the last consummation necessary to ensure my fortune. The children are safe in heaven; they are far better off than if they had continued in this unsatisfactory world."

The cynical hardness with which these words were uttered caused the baron to regard the speaker with something like admiration mingled with a strong feeling of dread. He was not less cruel than his nephew, but he lacked his boldness, and after a pause he said:

"I am glad, Ernest, that I have no children to stand in the way of your succession to lands and honours—though I cannot say that I am glad I have not the last to give you. If the condition of affairs were altered, I am afraid that you and I might not remain such fast friends."

"Perhaps not," was the indifferent reply. "I can hardly imagine how it might be if our positions were reversed, and I dependent on you instead of you on me. Only assist me to carry out my plans, uncle, and the luxurious home you enjoy here shall be yours as long as you live, with everything else that can contribute to your happiness. You must refrain from moralizing on the course I am bound to pursue, for if the child is found I must know that the sod is resting on her breast before I can feel secure in the tenure of Lichtenfels."

"So much the worse for her—so much the worse for her," muttered the baron; "but what could I do if I attempted to help her? The chances are that I could never find her, for this man speaks as if he means to keep his secret. Besides, the duchess would never do for me as much as Ernest does."

Baron Ardeheim was the brother of Prince Ernest's mother, and after a youth of dissipation he retired to Berchtholz, stripped of his small fortune and entirely dependent on his nephew.

He proved a congenial companion and a capable assistant to Prince Ernest, and his claims were liberally considered; he had a suite of apartments luxuriously

fitted up, a servant to attend upon him, and uncontrolled authority over the household in the absence of its master.

All these advantages a passing qualm of conscience could not induce him to relinquish, and even before the prince impatiently spoke he had made up his mind to the course he must pursue.

"Well, uncle, what are you mumbling to yourself about? I hope you are not hesitating about serving the best and only friend you have."

"Oh, no, no—by no means, nephew," stammered the baron, in some confusion.

"Come now, you have a pretty invention, Baron Ardhelm, and I wish you to use it in striking out some subtle means of bringing our prisoner to his senses. Imprisonment and mental torture have been tried on him in vain, and I own that I am at a loss to know what to have recourse to next. I have threatened him heavily, but so long as he remains at bay it will be bad policy to proceed to extreme measures; yet I have not the time to wear out his patience by the slow tortures of confinement and semi-starvation. Come, uncle, set your *bizarre* fancy to work to devise some punishment that will be unique and at the same time will meet his peculiar case."

The fat face of the listener puckered itself into a sinister smile, and his cruel eyes twinkled at the proposal thus made.

He was a professed philanthropist, and the soft blandness of his manners gave him a reputation for kindness of heart; but the tiger-like spirit that ruled rampant in the breast of Prince Ernest lay sleeping beneath the calm exterior of his uncle, only needing a skillful touch to goad it into action.

Prince Ernest fully understood this, for he knew much of the early history of his kinsman, and he was aware that for one good impulse carried out he had committed cruelties of fourfold amount in his cool, impassive way.

In reply to his nephew's appeal the baron half smiled, closed his small eyes, and tapping his forehead with his finger, said:

"Let me think a moment. My small abilities, such as they are, are entirely at your service, my dear Ernest. Yes, yes—we must wrench from Ledru his well-guarded secret; get possession of the child, and, as you suggest, send her to heaven as soon as possible to join her brothers. Let me see—a plan has darted into my mind which may produce the result you so ardently desire."

"Pray develop your idea, uncle, for I am all impatience to hear it."

The baron glanced around, slightly lowered his voice, and his companion bent forward to listen to his suggestion.

But, cautiously, as they were uttered, they did not escape the ears, sharpened by terror, that listened behind one of the book-cases which stood in a recess near the table at which the two plotters sat.

At the end of the library a small apartment had been built in the thick wall, which looked as if it might have originally been intended as an oratory, for the remains of an altar were still found, and in the recess it had occupied a shaded light was placed.

This narrow cell was now occupied by the same lady who had so mysteriously addressed Oliver.

At the back of one of the book-shelves was a small sliding panel on a level with the ear of a person of ordinary height; one of the volumes had been slightly displaced, and the door of the case was purposely left ajar.

The piercing whisper in which the baron spoke distinctly reached the ear of the listener, and she shuddered and wrung her small hands as she gathered its purport. She grew faint as she thought:

"Ah! what will the wretches next attempt? What refinement of torture will that fat, good-natured looking monster be capable of dictating to Prince Ernest that he will not be ready to carry out? Oh, heaven, help me in this extremity!"

After this brief prayer she again bent her ear to the opening, and she heard the eagerness with which the prince accepted the suggestion of his uncle.

She greatly feared that the ordeal proposed might prove even too severe for the well-tested courage of her emissary, and she hastily tried to think of some means of circumventing the wickedness about to be attempted, and foiling the plotters with their own weapons.

She was a tall, delicate-looking woman, apparently about twenty-eight or thirty years of age, with a care-worn, sorrowful expression, and eyes of dark, humid beauty, that seemed familiar with tears.

The black hair was already profusely mingled with gray, and her lips wore the sad expression stamped upon them by the unhappy experience of her life.

Ten years before this dreary day the young and lovely Baroness of Waldorf had given her hand to the heir of Lichtenfels, amid rejoicings that filled the measure of her happiness and pride.

The marriage, though between persons of such

high rank, had been one of choice, and a brilliant and happy future seemed to lie before the pair.

Before the first year of their union expired bonfires were lighted and bells were rung for the birth of an heir; but, alas! the rejoicings were short-lived, for the fair and noble-looking boy died of some mysterious disease within three months of his birth.

A second son shared the same fate, dying exactly as the first had done. The mother grieved over them with passionate sorrow, and long refused to be comforted, though at that time she did not suspect that they had been unfairly dealt with.

In those days the Prince of Barchtols was the most intimate and trusted friend of her husband, and he seemed nearly as much attached to the children as the parents themselves.

But the sudden death of the head nurse threw a horrible and mysterious light on their fate. She did not confess the crime in her dying agonies, but in her delirium she uttered such words as furnished a clue to the deed that had been committed with her connivance, and all she said pointed so unmistakably to Prince Ernest as the instigator of the crime that no doubt of his guilt was left in the mind of the unhappy mother.

At the time the Duchess of Lindorf became convinced of this her husband was absent in the army of the Emperor, and she, fearing to accuse his favourite nephew to her father-in-law, the old Elector, took refuge with her own mother, the Baroness of Waldorf, till the duke's return.

The news of her husband's death upon the field of battle came to her, and several months later her daughter was born. The forlorn widow trembled when she thought that this feeble little life was the only obstacle that lay in the way to the succession of the ambitious and unprincipled Prince of Barchtols to his uncle's possessions.

What added to her difficulties was the certainty that the Elector murmured at the prospect of his noble inheritance falling into the possession of a female minor, and the unhappy lady felt assured that if anything were to happen to the infant heiress her own grandfather would be the last to regret a death which enabled him to bestow his title and estates upon the nephew he had always distinguished by his partiality even above his son.

The Elector had pertinaciously refused to listen to any accusation against Prince Ernest, and he insisted that there was no proof that his grandsons had not died from natural causes, as so many other children annually do.

After the decease of the young duke the old man showed his fondness for his nephew by retaining him as much as possible about his person, and listening to his suggestions, when he would not pay attention to those offered by any other person.

Prince Ernest took advantage of this to declare himself aggrieved at the suspicions entertained against him by his cousin's widow, and he insinuated that the young heiress was kept at the castle of her grandmother that the people might be induced to believe she would not be safe at Lichtenfels.

A hint of this kind was sufficient.

The Duchess of Lindorf was peremptorily commanded to return to Lichtenfels and bring her infant daughter with her.

She used every effort to evade obedience, but the threat of the Elector to remove the child from her guardianship, if she still proved contumacious, forced her to return to his court.

There, of course, she found Prince Ernest, who affected to take the tenderest interest in the heiress, and on all occasions gave his advice as to her training and amusements.

Firmly impressed with the belief that with the first opportunity he would remove the child by poison, the duchess endeavoured to fortify the constitution of the little creature against it by constantly giving to her an antidote which was furnished her by a learned physician, in whose skill she had great confidence.

In spite of every precaution she could use, when Irene entered her fourth year she was attacked with such violent illness after a childish festival held in honour of her third birthday, that for many hours her life was despaired of.

The court physician declared that her illness was solely the result of eating imprudently; but the learned medical friend before consulted by the duchess came in secret at the dead of night to visit the sick child. He warned her mother that her life had been tampered with, and nothing had saved her but the precautions adopted at his suggestion.

He prescribed for the symptoms he detected, and left in the hands of the distracted mother such medicine as he believed would remove the effects of the fatal agent which had been introduced into the child's system.

Irene recovered, but she did not regain the elasticity of childhood. She was delicate, and suffered from a nervous depression, which convinced

her mother that unless she was removed from the vicinity of Prince Ernest she would never be permitted to bloom into womanhood.

Yet she dared not hint her fears to the Elector, for anything that touched the honour of his nephew was deeply offensive to him.

In this strait she knew not whither to turn: whom to trust.

While in this wretched state of uncertainty a petition was sent to her from a former servant, who had been condemned to death; she interested herself in his case, and procured the reversal of his sentence, thus bending to her interests a faithful slave, who vowed to do sooner than betray the trust she confided to him.

With the assistance of a few attached friends who shared the suspicions of the duchess, arrangements were made to transfer the child to England and place her in an asylum to which it would be impossible for the prince to trace her.

She was to be kept there till after her grandfather's death, when she could be restored to her own in safety and honour.

But of one particular the alarmed mother had been ever careful: fearful that in a moment of imprudence she might betray the spot on which her daughter was to be found, she refused to know the names of those to whom she was entrusted, or the exact locality of the home to which she was conveyed.

How far she had succeeded in secreting the little Irene, and what efforts had been made by her kinsman to trace her, we have seen.

About the time the young heiress was spirited away the Elector sank into a species of imbecility but little removed from idiocy, and the management of his affairs fell into the hands of his nephew, who, it was well known, had been appointed the guardian of his cousin, with unlimited power over her destiny until she attained her twenty-first year.

Under such circumstances, it was scarcely probable that the mystery which shrouded her place of concealment would be penetrated till the Lady Irene became of age.

The most strenuous efforts of Prince Ernest had been baffled, though he never ceased to make them; for the fixed purpose of his life, as he had himself asserted, was to remove from his path the obstruction which lay between himself and the high destiny he coveted.

From his own lips the pale mother had just heard the avowal of his nefarious intentions, but she dared not accuse him of the crimes she knew he had already perpetrated, nor of the one he was ready to commit whenever an opportunity was afforded.

Protected by his uncle, beloved by the people, to whom he lost no opportunity of commending himself, the Duchess of Lindorf knew that she would have no chance to receive justice should she venture to bring forward her accusation without irrefragable proof of its authenticity. So she must continue to work in the dark, and maintain her daughter's incognito till the death of the Elector would enable her to use such weapons against Prince Ernest as he had himself furnished her with.

Absorbed in painful thought, she was unconscious of the approach of anyone till the voice of Herman spoke almost in her ear. He briefly said:

"Your highness will be pleased to descend now, as it will not be safe to linger longer here. The prince and the baron have gone to supper, and we must profit by their absence to gain the lower entrance, from which I shall have time to take you to your carriage."

"No one suspects that I have been here?" she asked, as she closed the orifice and prepared to descend the staircase, which wound downward from the confined nook in which she had been concealed.

"No one save those who are devoted to you to the death, my lady. Trust me. I have foiled Prince Ernest before this, and I promise you to do the same again. Pardon me, your highness, but there is one thing that weighs on my mind. Now that Ledru is here, will it not be well to require from him the name of the family in which your daughter is placed, and where they are to be found? Think—if anything were to happen to him you would not know exactly where to seek the Lady Irene."

"I could apply to Hildeburger. She will always know where my child is to be found."

"My lady, now that the prince has those letters, you may be sure that he will find means to reach her. I am afraid that she is not above temptation, and I think it will be best to remove the Lady Irene from her present asylum before Hildeburger can be communicated with by him."

At this suggestion the duchess became even paler than she was before, and she hastily replied:

"It may be so—yes—yes—tell Ledru to give me the information that we may take every precaution against such treachery. I only know that my darling was placed in the care of a gentle-

man and his sister, who lived in a retired part of England, in an old manor-house, which they scarcely possessed the means to support. The sum annually paid for receiving Irene induced them to undertake the charge without inquiring too minutely into her antecedents. Yes—yes—I must find out who they are, for I see plainly that I shall be forced to remove my daughter from their protection."

"It will be necessary, my lady, to give me some proof that I have authority from you to make this demand, or Ledru may hesitate to trust me."

The duchess drew off a seal-ring she wore on her left hand, and placing it in his, said:

"He will know this, for I always stamp my letters with the device it bears. Show it to Ledru, and demand all necessary particulars in my name, for we must be wily as the serpent to circumvent these wicked men. I will tell you what I overheard, and leave you to take such steps as will prevent the consummation of the deeds they have planned. Poor Ledru has already suffered terribly through his devotion to me, and he must be rescued from Prince Ernest at all hazards."

As they wound down through the depths of the rock on which the castle stood, the duchess gave Herman an exact detail of all she had heard, and he pledged himself to do all that was possible to effect the release of the supposed Ledru.

They at length reached a small oval chamber nearly on a level with the stream; Herman lifted a square of stone in the corner of the floor, beneath which a shallow was found secured to a strong iron bolt driven into the rock.

He sprang into this, and lifting down the lady, placed her safely on a seat in the stern of the boat.

Both crouched down, and Herman gave an impulse to the bark by striking against the wall. It shot from beneath the overhanging rock into the open stream, and keeping close to the wall of the castle, with the aid of an oar, Herman guided the boat to a jutting point of land clothed with low underwood, behind which a carriage stood in waiting for the duchess.

Before stepping into it she impressively said:

"I trust you implicitly, Herman, as I have always done. Use all your craft to save poor Ledru from these ruthless men. He has already borne so much—so much for me and mine. But be sure, above all, to learn the secret that is so important to me. I can scarcely comprehend now how I could so long have rested satisfied without it."

"Rely on it, my lady, that I shall do my best to obey your commands in both respects. You know that nothing will be wanting to ensure success on my part."

"Heaven grant that it may prove so. If our plan succeeds, come to me at Waldorf. My mother is dead, but I keep the place up, and I shall remain there in the hope that you can bring Ledru to see me after you effect his release."

"Your highness shall see him before the week is out; rest assured of that."

"Ah! Herman, faithful friend, you always cheer and sustain me. Heaven knows how deeply I thank you for all the services you have rendered me."

She offered him her hand, which he reverently raised to his lips.

He then assisted her to the carriage, which was driven rapidly away, and Herman, under the friendly veil of night, returned to the castle to mature his plans for circumventing the master who believed him entirely devoted to his interests.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE supper at Berchthold that night was a carousal. Both uncle and nephew drank deeply, though the wine produced very different effects upon them.

The more Prince Ernest drank, the paler and more marble-like became his complexion, bringing out the blue mark that disfigured his cheek more prominently than usual, but the baron flushed a deeper purple, and his small eyes flashed with vindictive purpose as they discussed the plan they had agreed on between them.

They spoke in French, with which language the attendants were not acquainted, unconscious that Herman had managed to conceal himself behind the arras, and had become a listener to every word that was spoken.

As the hours waned, the baron began to feel the need of something more stimulating than wine to keep much longer awake. He suddenly said:

"Why shall we postpone our purpose till to-morrow, Ernest? The poor devil will be glad enough to satisfy his hunger now, I daresay. Despatch your orders to the cook to send up an appetizing little supper, with the sauce *piquante*, and after amusing ourselves at the dog's expense, let him really devour it. Then we shall see what we shall see, ha! ha! ha!"

His laugh gurgled forth with the bubbling sound which indicated the extreme limit of intoxication at which the speaker ever arrived.

Prince Ernest smiled, and the expression of his curved lips might have been worthy of the chief of pandemonium himself. He briefly said:

"Good; I will act on your suggestion."

He tore a leaf from his tablets, and after writing an order on it, he gave it to one of the attendants, and said:

"Tell Hugel to come hither without delay, and in half an hour the dishes I have ordered must be brought up."

The man bowed, left the apartment, and in a short time Hugel came in.

The order to bring the prisoner before the prince scarcely surprised him, for such an orgie as the present one rarely ended without some act of violence or cruelty on the part of that pallid, self-centred man, who boasted that an ocean of wine could never unsettle his brain so much as to render him unfit for business.

When Hugel entered the tower occupied by Oliver he found him sleeping so heavily that it required some effort to arouse him. When he at length sat up and looked around him in a bewildered manner, it was several moments before he could recall what had lately happened, or where he then was. He at length asked, in a collected manner:

"What can you want with me at this hour of the night?"

"Oh, it's never too late to satisfy one's hunger, and my master sends you an invitation to sup with him. This time it will be no sham, for he really means to let you eat. Come with me while he is in the humour, for nobody can tell how soon he may change his mind."

"It is true that I am still very hungry, but if the Blue Tiger only wishes to tantalise me again by the sight of food which I shall not be permitted to taste, I decline his invitation."

Having uttered these words, Oliver lay down again. Hugel stared at him, and then burst into a loud laugh.

"Do you for an instant suppose that you will be allowed to decline such a summons as this? I should think your past experience had taught you better than that, M. Ledru. Prince Ernest is not a man to be trifled with."

The menace in his tones assured Oliver that he was in earnest, and curious himself to see what would result from the interview, he arose and silently followed Hugel into the sumptuous dining-hall, blazing with lights, and reeking with the mingled fumes of wine and rich food.

The fragments of the feast still remained upon the table at which the prince and his companion sat, and near it was placed a smaller one, on which stood a loaf of bread and a pitcher of water.

To these the baron pointed as he jeeringly said:

"You are our welcome guest, M. Ledru, and we mean to entertain you right royally, that is, if you prove yourself worthy of our hospitality."

The sight and scent of the viands left upon the larger table only tended to sharpen the hunger which Oliver's meagre supper had not allayed, and he could not restrain the glance of eager longing he cast upon the well-spread board at which his tormentors sat.

They exchanged glances full of meaning, and Prince Ernest haughtily asked:

"Caitiff, are you ready now to confess—to reply to the question which has been so often and so vainly propounded? Where is the child?"

"As God lives, I do not know!" cried the poor victim. "I have already confessed to you the ghastly deception I practised, yet you refuse to believe me. Is it not enough that it has ruined me, and rendered me wretched, without bringing me to such a pass as this?"

"Ledru, do not commit the crime of falsehood without any gain to yourself," spoke the bland tones of the baron's voice. "Where is the child?"

He held up a purse filled with gold, and jingled its glittering contents before the eyes of the prisoner, who replied:

"I do not need your gold; all I ask is freedom to return to my native land, where I never wish to hear of you or your incomprehensible mystery again. I am an Englishman: I will find means to claim the protection of my government, and force you to permit me to go about my own affairs, even if that question remain unanswered."

"Hear him; he talks as if such a thing were possible," sneered the prince. "When you escape from us you may demand the protection which, if the truth be established, would end in hanging you for robbery and murder. But that tale is incredible, monsieur. You lie with a grace that is inimitable, I confess, but you see we know that you are lying, so there is no use trying such a sham on with us again. Money

won't buy your secret, it seems, but perhaps starvation will."

The heart of the listener sank.

He felt so faint and exhausted that his courage began to give way; these men refused to believe the truth when he spoke it, then why should he not speak falsely, and obtain the food he so greatly needed? He felt that his mind was failing him from weakness, and it was necessary to keep his wits about him if he would escape from the snare into which he had so unwarily fallen.

Thus thinking, Oliver said:

"I will relieve my mind from its burden. I will confess that the child is in London."

A dark frown gathered on the brow of the prince, and the blue mark grew almost black as he wrathfully exclaimed:

"How dare you trifle with me thus? I know that the child is in England, but the letters distinctly prove that she is in some sequestered spot in the country. It is for you to point out her asylum, and I again ask you where she is to be found. Name those who protect her, or it shall be the worse for you."

"Alas! that is exactly what I cannot do. If she has been removed from London, it was without my knowledge."

"Ha! ha! what a trickster it is," laughed the baron, uproariously. "Poor fellow! he is half famished, and I think it will be better to let him have one full meal before he is finally dealt with. What do you say, Ernest? Have we not starved him long enough for this time?"

"Perhaps we have; since you wish it, let food be placed before him," was the laconic reply, and a sign was given to the servant to bring up the supper which had been previously ordered.

(To be continued.)

ZEHRA.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE heavy lamps that hung in the great Court of Lions—the most magnificent apartment of the Alhambra—were half lighted, and at the head of the hall stood the Moslem king. He was patting his daintily slipped foot nervously upon the pavement, and ever and anon his left hand would rest with a sort of convulsive grasp upon his dagger-hilt. Against one of the massive marble lions leaned Ben Hamed. A look of anxiety was upon his features, and he watched the movements of the monarch with more than ordinary interest. Several of the royal attendants were standing about the place, and they, too, looked anxiously upon the king.

"Ah, Ben Hamed," said Mohammed; "I think your fair daughter likes this Christian knight."

"Not with maiden love, sire. She only likes him because he would have borne her away from you."

"By Allah! the dog needs to die!"

"He must die," ventured Ben Hamed, in an insinuating tone. "Would you have borne such insult from a Moor?"

"No!"

"He has slain three of our knights."

"He shall die!"

"And soon, too?" added the Alcalde, with a look of triumph.

"Aye," returned the king.

"Why not to-night?" Ben Hamed asked, moving nearer to the king, and speaking in a trembling tone.

Mohammed strode half-way down the hall and back again.

"Ben Hamed," he said, stopping near the Alcalde, "you have some end to answer in this."

"Only such as may benefit you, sire. Allah knows I owe thee much."

"In truth, you do."

"And by this will I in part make the payment."

"By what?"

"By urging the necessity of destroying the Christian."

"I have said once—he dies!"

"Thy judgment is just."

"But I will have his head as a present for my bride if she prove restive."

"A Christian's head will keep, sire."

"How long will it keep, think you, Ben Hamed, ere it will begin to go back to its native dust?"

"If taken off to-night it will keep till long after your nuptials."

"Think ye so?"

"Most surely."

"I have a mind to try the experiment."

The king had been speaking in a half-unconscious mood, his thoughts seeming to wander about other matters; but as the last sentence fell from his lips he aroused himself and gazed fixedly upon the Alcalde.

"By Allah!" he continued, "I have a mind to try it."

Ben Hamed could not conceal his satisfaction. "Our laws make it death for the Christian who shall force away one of our people," said the king, half to himself. "Charles of Leon knew this, and yet he would snatch away my bride. Allah! The Christian's time has come. Husam Ben Abbas, go you to the prison and bid Tarik take off the head of his Christian prisoner. Let it be done at once."

"I go, sire," returned a Moslem knight, who started up from near one of the pedestals. "Hold, Husam. Stay you and see the work performed—then bring me word."

Ben Abbas bowed assent and withdrew. "Now, Ben Hamed," continued the monarch, "the Christian's business is settled. On the day after to-morrow Zehra takes up her home here."

"She is ready, sire."
"And is she reconciled?"
"She will be."
"She had better."
"Yet, sire, it would be well not to let her know at present of the Christian's death."

"Ha!"
"Not that she bears him any love, sire; but you know the nature of one like her. 'Twould move her to misery to see even a beast suffer. There is no need that she should know of this—at least, for the present."

"Well, well—I have no desire to annoy her." As the king thus spoke he commenced to pace the hall. Ben Hamed was too lame to walk easily, so he stood and watched his monarch. All that he at present desired seemed to have been accomplished, and his satisfaction manifested itself upon his countenance.

Half an hour had passed away, when Husam Ben Abbas returned.

"You're soon back, Ben Abbas," said the king. "Tarik has been quick with his work. Upon my faith, Husam, does it affect you so to see a man die?"

"I've seen no one die, sire."
"Ah—so you took Tarik's word for it, I suppose."

"There was no one to kill."
"No one to kill? I said the Christian! I meant Charles of Leon!"

"Surely, sire; but Charles of Leon is not there."
"Not there! Did Tarik tell thee so?"

"He did."
"Then he lies! The Christian dog is there. Go back and bid the jailer produce him."

"Sire, the prisoner has escaped."
"Escaped!" echoed the king, springing forward and seizing Ben Abbas by the arm. "Now, by the holy Prophet, lie not to me! Escaped, say you?"

"Yes, sire. I went with Tarik to the Christian's dungeon, but no prisoner was there. The iron bar of the window had been cut off, and the prisoner was gone."

The king let go his hold upon Husam's arm, and started back aghast.

"Gone!" he uttered. "Then he must have had help."

"So he may have had. Tarik let an old dervish into the prison, and he thinks he may have done the mischief."

"Go, Ben Abbas, and tell Tarik that his own life shall be the forfeit if the prisoner come not back," shouted Mohammed, as he strode nervously across the hall. "Ben Hamed, hasten you and look to your daughter. By the powers of heaven, the dog shall not escape me. He must have fled to the north. Mahmoud, off with thee to the Alcauza, and have the signals ready for earliest daylight. Let the signals be made for Jaen and El Ajo that no traveller be allowed to pass from the south. Hold! How far reach our signals now?"

"To our northern frontier," returned he whom the king had called Mahmoud.

"Then thou shalt take charge of the signals. Oh, Allah, give me back my prisoner. Let him be once more in my power and he lives not to escape again. Ho, there! Where are my officers?"

At this bidding a number of attendants stepped forward from among the marble statues and pillars.

"To horse at once!" shouted Mohammed. "Call up the guard and set off. Stop at the prison and obtain from Tarik a description of the dervish; ride then for the north. Spare not your beasts. Off now. Let not a man on the road escape your attention."

The officers withdrew, and the king had thought himself alone, when his eye fell upon a female who stood against one of the pillars near him.

"Who is there?"
"Your wife."
"Emina?"
"Yes."
"And what seek ye?"
"My husband."

"Then now that you have found him you can retire."

"Not so fast, my lord," returned Emina, moving a step towards the king. "I have come to speak with thee. I have come once more to beg of thee that thou wilt have compassion on me. Mohammed, thou wilt not take to thy bosom another wife to take precedence of me."

"Go seek thine own apartments, Emina, and leave me to myself."

"Answer me, Mohammed. I know that the Christian has escaped, and that you will try to recapture him. Of that you can do as you please; but oh, let me warn you not to move farther in your designs respecting Ben Hamed's daughter."

"What! would you threaten me?"

"No, my lord. Only would I warn thee. There's danger you cannot see. Give o'er this work—let Zehra alone—and all will be well with thee."

"Get thee gone! Away, Emina—else it shall not be well with thee."

"Oh, Mohammed, I implore thee!"

"Out, I say!"

"Not until you have answered me."

"Zehra shall be as I have chosen, and that, too, ere two more suns have rolled over us."

"Then the worst be thine."

The king was maddened, and springing quickly forward, he struck Emina upon the cheek.

"There! now get thee gone," he gasped.

Emina started back as she received the blow, and she turned as pale as the marble that was grouped about her.

She did not speak, but with a step that was as firm as iron she turned from the king's presence.

"Fool!" murmured Mohammed; and when the woman's form had disappeared, he sought his own couch.

CHAPTER XVIII.

It was nearly daylight when Charles of Leon and his esquire reached the small hill where the former had been captured by the Moors. The East was already streaked with glowing red, and the stars were beginning to fade from sight. They reached the small wood at the foot of the hill, and here they stopped.

"Now throw off your wig and beard, and cast away that robe," said Pedro, "for should those come after us who would trace our steps such marks would surely betray us."

"I had thought of that myself," returned the knight. "Oh, if I only had my good sword."

"Never mind—we have stout daggers, and we may find swords on the road."

"Perhaps so; but horses come first," said Charles, as he threw off his robe.

"We may find them at Xejal. That is not over a league from here, and there we will obtain refreshments and rest."

"And even there we cannot remain long."

"No. We must not make a stop of any length this side of St. Lorenzo. Courage, master; we will obtain horses at Xejal, and then we are safe."

Charles of Leon hid the disguise he had taken off, and his appearance was now a puzzling one to define. His dress was half-way between the Christian and Moor, while his face, which still retained the skillfully applied paint that Pedro had put on, looked Moorish enough, though as daylight became stronger the esquire removed some of the wrinkles, so that the face might be in better keeping with the rest of the man.

"At Xejal we may find a little wine," said Pedro, as they again started on. "That will revive us."

"By my faith, we both need reviving," returned Charles. "But I am not so faint yet but that I can keep the road, should there be danger near."

"So with me," said Pedro; "and I fear that we are not yet clear of danger."

"Let it come, Pedro. I fear no danger. By heavens, I have not done with the Moslem yet."

Pedro made no reply to this last remark; but a dubious look rested upon his countenance as he gazed into his master's face.

The sun was well up when the travellers reached Xejal. The place was but a small hamlet, situated in a quiet vale, and containing some twenty dwellings.

There was a small inn not far from the road, and thither the Christians bent their steps.

The keeper of the place was a lean, lank Moor, but yet good-natured in his looks, and as the travellers entered he bustled about with an accommodating air.

Pedro asked for refreshments, and the Moor showed them to a small apartment in the end of the building, and ere long such things as the place afforded were set before them.

"Selim," said Pedro—for he had heard one of the inmates address the landlord thus—"can you not afford us a little wine?"

"Wine!" uttered the keeper, raising his hands in

holy horror. "The Prophet defend me. Are ye good Mussulmans, and yet ask me for wine?"

"We are good Mussulmans, but we are weary, and we ask wine only for medication; think not hard of us, good Selim, for Allah knows we abhor the infidel beverage."

"I am a good Moslem," said Selim.

"We know it," returned Pedro, "for even in Jaen they speak of you as one upon whom every virtue rests with honour."

"Do they?" cried the Moor, while a flash of gratification lit up his swarthy features.

"In truth, they do."

"And are you from Jaen?"

"Yes; and going to El Ajo. I tell thee, good Selim, I shall speak well of thee to travellers. This bread of thine is excellent."

Pedro worked hard upon the bread of which he spoke, and one could almost have fancied that he spoke the truth.

"We would have paid a high price for some wine," continued the esquire, as he sipped the washy sherbet-like drink that had been set before him; "but we must do without it, I suppose."

The Moor walked to the window and looked out. He played a few moments with the lattice-work, and then he turned towards his guests.

"Ah," he uttered, with a comical attempt to appear as though a sudden thought had struck him. "Now I remember me that sometime since I put away in my cellar some juice which I myself pressed from the grapes. It may not have become strong yet. I will get it, and you shall see if it be proper beverage."

Selim left the room, and ere long he returned with a stone bottle.

"Ah, that is sweet and innocent," exclaimed Pedro, as he placed the bottle to his lips.

"I am glad," returned the Moor; and as he thus spoke he again withdrew.

"San Dominic, Sir Charles, how old should you say that wine was?" uttered Pedro, as he poured some out into his master's cup.

"By my faith, but it's good," said the knight.

"The Moor must have been a very small boy when he bottled it," added Pedro, as he smacked his lips.

"So he must," returned Charles, "and he must have stolen a French vintage, too."

Pedro laughed over the wine, which sparkled merrily after its long confinement, and beneath its exhilarating influence he almost forgot that such a thing as danger existed.

"If we can but find horses as strong as is this wine, we need have nothing to fear," said Charles, as he pushed the bottle from him.

"We will see," returned Pedro. "Suppose I go out and see Selim? He may have some himself. I look more plainly the Moor than you do, and I shall not be so easily detected."

"You are right there, Pedro. Go at once, for we had better not remain long here."

The esquire started off to seek the landlord, and Charles of Leon began to pace the apartment. He was miserable when left alone to his own reflections, for he could think only of Zehra, and of the misery she might be doomed to suffer.

Bitter disappointment had made his love more fervent, and the fire burned within him with an almost consuming power. The large dark eyes of the maiden he loved were constantly before him, and he could fancy the tears that flowed from them.

One with less of religious trust would have cursed the fate that hung over his way; but the Christian knight only bowed in anguish, and longed for the time when he might meet the Moslem in fair combat.

While the knight's thoughts were thus engaged he heard a horse come galloping up to the door of the inn. He went to the window, in hopes that it might be Pedro who had returned successful; but he was disappointed, for the new comer was only a Moorish traveller.

Shortly afterwards Pedro re-entered the apartment. He looked flustered and uneasy.

"Can you obtain horses?" asked Charles.

"I have found some that will answer; but they may do us no good after all."

"Ah! Are they poor?"

"No, no—not that," quickly returned Pedro, casting a hurried glance about him. "We are detected!"

"Detected!" repeated Charles, with sudden alarm.

"Not here, but we shall be. You heard that horse gallop up a moment ago?"

"Yes."

"He has come from the height of El Ajo. Signals have been made from Granada for the stoppage of all travellers, and of course we shall not be allowed to proceed."

"But they think we come from Jaen."

"That's nothing. The messenger asked if there were any travellers here, and Selim told him of us."



[EMINA WARNS THE KING.]

"And did he say he should stop us in our journey?"

"Yes."

Charles gazed a moment upon the floor.

"Pedro," he asked, "what men are there about the house?"

"Some half-dozen loungers besides the landlord and messenger."

"Where are the horses you have seen that we could have had?"

"They are in the small stable at the back of the house."

"Are the bridles handy?"

"Yes."

"Then stand by me, Pedro, and we will make our way through the small number that will oppose us. Ere long a host will be down from Granada. Come, our daggers will serve us."

"San Jago, I'll stand by you, my master."

"Then lead the way to the stable."

The two passed out from the apartment and entered a narrow hall that ran through to the backyard. At the stable they found Selim and the messenger, together with five of the people who belonged to the hamlet.

"Are our horses ready?" asked Charles.

"No," hesitatingly returned Selim.

"Then let them be so at once. I will pay you your charge."

"You will have to remain here for the present," said the messenger.

"Ah! How so?" uttered Charles, gazing upon the speaker, who was an oldish man, and armed with a cimeter.

"We have received orders from Granada to allow no one to pass."

"That order must have been meant for someone who has escaped from justice, and not for us. Let us have our horses, good Selim, for we are in much haste."

"No, no," interposed the messenger. "The orders are from the king, and they are imperative. Officers will arrive ere long from Granada, and if they are satisfied, then you can pass."

"What have I to do with your officers?" exclaimed the knight. "Selim, lead forth your horses."

"I cannot," returned the landlord.

A moment Charles of Leon gazed about him. None of those present were armed excepting the messenger.

Near him stood a long, heavy oaken club, which seemed to have been used for beating grain. Charles seized it, and then turned to his esquire.

"Pedro," he said, "lead out the best horse you can find, and he who dares molest you falls on the spot."

Pedro knew his master too well to hesitate, and he moved towards the stall.

"Shall I take one for you?" he asked.

"I will look out for myself. Be quick about it."

"If you attempt to resist the king's authority the worst be your own," uttered the messenger, at the same time drawing his cimeter.

"I have studied the cost, and shall abide by my judgment," returned Charles of Leon, grasping his heavy club with a firmer hold.

"For heaven's sake, gentlemen, let there be no bloodshed here!" cried the landlord, who trembled from head to foot.

"Ho! all of you: I call upon you in the king's name to assist me," shouted the messenger. "Back from that horse! back, I say, or you shall rue it."

The last sentence was addressed to Pedro, but he noticed it not.

He had backed a horse from the low stall, and had taken down a light saddle and thrown it across the animal's back.

His hand was upon a bridle that hung near when the messenger spoke, and he threw it at once over the horse's head.

"Back yourself!" exclaimed Charles, as he raised the club above his head. "We go from this place at our own will, and woe be to you if you interfere."

"Now, by the Prophet, you have gone far enough. You dare not touch a royal officer in the discharge of his duty. Leave that horse."

A curl of derision broke about the lips of the Christian knight.

"Mark me," he said, "I but protect myself. To do that I have often dared even death. I can dare it again!"

"For heaven's sake, gentlemen," urged the poor publican.

"Come on and aid me," cried the messenger, turning to the Moors behind him, some of whom had armed themselves with clubs, and seemed ready to show fight. "In the name of the king I bid you come."

"And in the name of the Christians' God I bid you stand back!" shouted Charles of Leon, swinging his weapon above his head.

"Ha! you are a Christian then?"

"Yes."

"Then you are the very men—"

The messenger's sentence was not concluded, for as he spoke he moved towards Pedro, and one

blow from the knight's club brought him to the ground.

Those villagers who had collected around had no interest in the present business, and they shrank back from the presence of the Christian.

None cared to come within the reach of his club, and now that the officer had fallen they seemed inclined to offer no farther resistance.

"Mount! mount!" cried Charles, as Pedro led the horse from the stable.

"But you, Sir Charles."

"The Moor's horse will do for me."

"Allah defend me!" ejaculated Selim, clasping his hands in agony. "Oh, the king will blame me. Good gentlemen Christians, do let me entreat you to stop. You must not go. The king will—"

"Peace, Selim," broke in Charles, as he drew a small purse from his bosom. "Here's gold enough to pay thee for thy horse, and for thy good wine, too."

"No, no—you had no wine, good sirs."

"Thy juice of grapes, then. Here, take the purse, and tell the messenger, when he finds his senses—if such a fortune should ever be his—that ere long his horse shall be set upon the road with his face turned homeward."

"By Allah!" cried one of the bystanders, "that's the very Christian knight that beat down the Alcalde in the lists."

This exclamation produced a marked sensation in the crowd. Two of the Moors who had moved forwards as if to offer some farther resistance, dropped their clubs and shrank back again.

The Christian knight looked almost terrific in his wrath, and those around could not fail to read a death warrant in his countenance for the first who should oppose him.

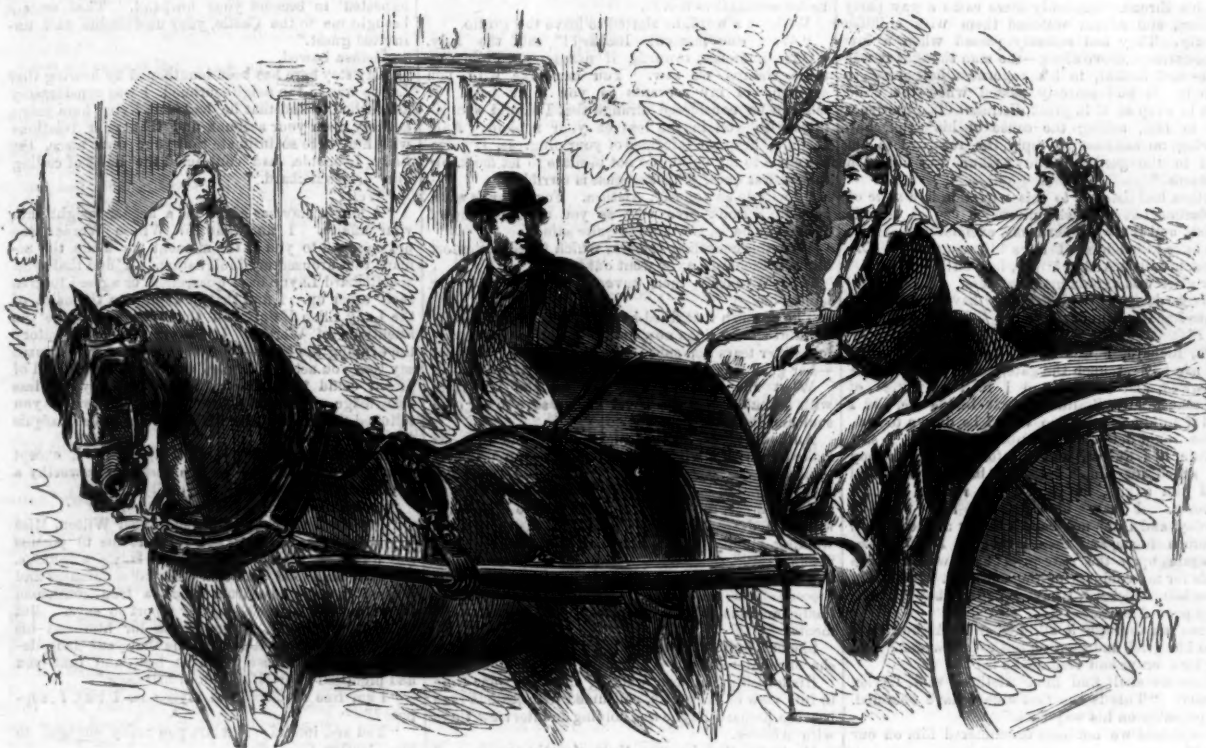
Pedro had mounted the horse he had chosen, and rode out into the yard. Charles sprang to the side of the fallen messenger and seized the bright cimeter, and also possessed himself of the scabbard.

The owner moved heavily and opened his eyes, but before he could speak the Christian had gone.

The Moor's horse stood by the inn door, and with a single bound Charles of Leon vaulted to the saddle and drew the rein. Pedro was by his side in an instant, and together they started off.

Selim cried after them to come back, and some of the others seemed half abashed of the inaction they had shown; but it was now too late, and just as the Christians disappeared the messenger came to himself only to find himself worse off than before.

(To be continued.)



[LEAVING THE FENS.]

THE HOUSE OF SECRETS.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Though looks and words,
By the strong mastery of his practised will,
Are overruled, the mounting blood betrays
An impulse in its secret springs too deep
For his control.

Southey.

It was the morning subsequent to little Arthur's abduction.

In the grotto, in which Basil Montmaur was first introduced to the reader, Miss Wycherly was reclining upon a pile of oriental cushions.

A gilded volume of poems had fallen from her hands to the floor, and she was dreamily watching the sky, of which she caught slight glimpses through the foliage of the trees shading the grotto entrance.

A feeling of strange content had taken possession of her soul.

That very morning she had received a letter from her lawyer, announcing that her directions had been obeyed in regard to her stocks and consols, and that a large sum of money, the result of their disposition, had been deposited in her name and subject to her order in the banking-house she had named.

Her future, therefore, seemed clear to her.

As she looked out upon the soft summer clouds, through the openings in the foliage of the trees, her imagination pictured a softer, warmer-hued sky, bending above a lovely, retired home in a foreign land, where she and her boy would be all in all to each other.

With a mother's fond idolatry, she pictured the child at play in their garden, as untamed in his glee as the southern breezes that should sweep his sunny brow.

In such a spot, in the midst of luxury and refining influences, he would forget the mystery that had enveloped his earlier years, and would grow up to be her comforter and friend. When he should attain his manhood, and ask her of his history—

Miss Alethea interrupted her reverie at this point with a sigh.

"He will believe me, I know he will," she murmured, restlessly.

Nevertheless, a sudden chill fell upon her. She knew that her boy, young as he was, already evinced a lofty pride, and that with him nobleness was inborn.

What if he should judge her harshly in the

future? What if he should disbelieve her assertions and protestations?

She assured herself again and again that he would not—that his love for her was the leading element in his soul—and that though all the world might condemn and turn from her, her son would still defend and uphold her.

"He will never have reason to blush for his name," she thought. "That is untarnished, and he may yet claim it before the eyes of the world. Whether he do so or not, he will never have reason to blush for his parentage."

And then a face came between her and her dreams of Arthur—a face she had loved far better than her life—and every feature of which had been to her a thousandfold dearer than even the life of her boy.

She was thinking of it with passionate yearning expressed in her proud dark eyes and haughty mouth, and her lips were quivering in bitter anguish, when the entrance to the grotto was suddenly darkened by a masculine figure, and Richard Layne entered her presence.

There was a troubled look about the young gentleman which he vainly strove to conceal, and his face was haggard and pale, as though he had passed a sleepless night.

There were lines, too, about his mouth that had not been there the day previous, and he looked like one upon whom a great grief had fallen.

He came forward into the shadow of the grotto that the light might not betray his changed appearance, and said, with affected lightness:

"I beg you will excuse my abrupt entrance, Alethea, into your retreat. I inquired for you at the Castle, and was told that you were in the garden. In the course of my search, I came upon the Lady Leopolds, who directed me to the grotto!"

Richard spoke rapidly, scarcely knowing what he said, with one or two forced laughs, as if to impress upon Miss Wycherly a conviction of his extreme light-heartedness.

He failed, of course.

His forced and unusual manner alarmed the lady at once.

She started up from her reclining posture, clenched her white hands tightly upon the cushion against which she leaned, and, with a deathly pallor upon her always pale face, exclaimed:

"Has anything happened, Richard? Is—is anyone hurt?"

Richard tried to laugh, but his voice sounded so strangely hollow as to startle even himself.

"How excitable you are, dear Alethea," he re-

marked, coming to her side, and putting his arm around her waist.

The light streamed in upon him as he sat there, and Miss Wycherly did not fail to remark in an instant the ravages a single night had wrought in his good-natured face.

"Tell me what it is, Richard," she said, in a hollow whisper, trembling like a leaf. "Something has happened to my boy. Is he ill?"

"No, indeed—that is, I hope not!" was the embarrassed response.

"You hope not? Don't you know?" and Miss Wycherly's voice rang out clear and shrill with pain. "Is—he—"

Her tongue refused to utter the word "dead." She clutched Richard's arm tightly, and looked into his face with such a wild, agonized look that, in mercy to her, he hastened to tell her the truth.

"Be brave and calm, dearest Alethea," he pleaded, holding her cold hand in his. "Arthur is well enough. The truth is, he has strayed away from home!"

"Strayed away?"

"Yes, he rambled off somewhere yesterday, while I was gone to town. I returned home late last evening, and learned from my servants that he had not been seen since morning. I immediately went in search of him, scouring the roads and fields, and my servants are still keeping up the search. Do not give way to your fears, dear Alethea; but, for heaven's sake, help me to think where he can have gone to!"

Miss Wycherly roused herself from the death-like stupor into which Richard's words had plunged her, and endeavored to command her thoughts.

"Have you been to the hidden cottage?" she asked. "He would have naturally gone back there in search of companionship?"

"Yes, Alethea, I went there first of all. Farmer Perkins is looking for Arthur over at the village, and Mary Perkins, in a frenzy of fear, has searched all around the cottage, with the idea that Arthur might have lost himself in it. No. Arthur did not go there."

"Whither could he have gone?" cried the young mother. "Who saw him last, Richard? What was he doing then?"

"The gardener was the last who saw him. The man was employed for a few minutes upon the front lawn in watering the shrubbery, and he asserts that he saw Arthur seated upon the gate-post!"

"I saw him there too," murmured Alethea, almost unconsciously.

"The man says he watched him for a few

minutes, for the lad had quite the air of a little king upon his throne. Suddenly there came a gay party of riders, and Arthur watched them with childish curiosity. They had scarcely passed when a low basket-carriage drove along—the man thought it was yours—and Arthur, in his eagerness, half arose to watch it. It had scarcely passed when the child began to weep as if in great distress. The gardener went to him, asking the cause of his grief, but, receiving no satisfactory reply, he returned to his duties in the garden. And Arthur was not seen afterwards!

Alethea had listened to this narration in a state of stupefaction, but now she uttered a cry of terrible anguish, and threw up her arms, exclaiming:

"I have killed him—I have killed my boy! Oh, my son, my little Arthur! Oh, heaven!"

Her grief was agonizing to witness.

"Why do you say that you have killed him, Alethea? He cannot be dead. What can you mean?"

"Oh, Richard, I was in that carriage yesterday when my boy sat upon the gate-post! He looked at me, bowed, and smiled, and I took no notice of him, because Mrs. Brathwaite sat beside me, and I feared if I did her attention would be drawn to him, and she would notice his resemblance to me. I saw his little lips quiver, and his form droop, and my heart ached for him. I looked back at him, and waved him a kiss, but it did not restore his lost brightness. I saw his griefed face all day yesterday, and I did not have a happy moment until my return home, and then I thought I should see him again upon the gate-post, and would make amends for my coldness of the morning. But I did not see him. Richard, I have killed my boy!"

"My poor Alethea."

"I can see through it all, Richard. Arthur gave way to his grief and then set out to follow me. You know how brave and resolute he is!"

"Then we shall find him, Alethea," said Layne, hopefully. "This is the first clue I have obtained. He is probably on his way back."

"But should we not have encountered him on our return?"

"He might have fallen asleep under a hedge. The day was warm, and the walk would have fatigued him. I shall look for him in that direction immediately. He may be there at this moment!"

"Then may heaven guard him!" cried the frantic young mother. "Oh, Richard, there were some tramps in possession of the ruins when we arrived, and they retreated to a little distance on account of our party, returning to them as we came away. They looked like travelling jugglers—yes, they were jugglers, for one of them offered to perform tricks for our amusement. They may have got my boy. You know how beautiful and graceful he is. Perhaps at this moment he is being taken farther from me!"

"Be calm, Alethea; you will exhaust yourself," pleaded Layne. "My groom went to the ruins, and if Arthur had been there he will learn the fact!"

"We should have more men engaged in the search. I will send out my servants."

"And so excite the curiosity of your guests as well as dependents. You are not acting with your usual caution, dear Alethea. The child will soon be found—I half expected to find him here with you. There is no cause for alarm!"

Alethea became more calm, and said, resolutely:

"When you find him, Richard, you must let me know on the instant. And you must bring him to me to-night. I cannot let him be away from me longer. You may make whatever excuses you can for the absence of your nephew, but I must have him back again. Oh, the agonies I have endured since I gave him up to you—the sleepless nights I have passed, and the long and desolate days! I can never part with him again. My boy! My beautiful boy!"

She sobbed unrestrainedly.

Richard Layne's eyes were full of tears, and his voice trembled as he said:

"Dear Alethea, I loved him too. I tried to make him happy. I was tender and gentle with him, as I would have been with a babe. I fear you blame me for his disappearance."

"No, Richard, I blame no one but myself. If I had but smiled upon him, or returned his pretty look he would have been safe at this moment. I know you loved him, Richard, and that you were a father to him. Do not blame yourself, for I alone have erred."

She spoke with such a heartbroken tone that Richard's heart ached for her.

"You had better join personally in the search for him, Richard," continued Miss Wycherly. "My heart is full of impatience and restlessness. I should feel better if I knew that you were in the saddle!"

She lifted her head wearily from his shoulder, and looked into his face with such despair that Layne

knew without being told that she believed her son to be for ever lost to her.

Without a word, he started to leave the grotto.

"Wait one moment, Richard!" said the lady. "Offer immense rewards, if necessary. Follow up those tramps we saw. You can take with you as many of my servants as you think best. It will not be considered strange that I should sympathize with you in the loss of your nephew. And, Richard, keep me informed of your progress. If harm has come to my child, do not hesitate to let me know the truth at once. This suspense is terrible!"

"I will do as you say, Alethea. For Arthur's sake, keep up. Don't give way as you are doing now! Wherever he is, the child is quite safe!"

With this consoling remark, which failed to comfort himself, Richard Layne went out.

Miss Wycherly then covered her face with her hands.

The anguish that filled her soul was betrayed only by faint shudders now and then. She gave way to neither tears nor sobs; she did not moan or wail—her grief was too deep for such outward expression. What she thought and felt as she lay there with shrouded face was never known save to her own soul and its Maker.

An hour passed, another, and another, and then she looked up with a wild, sad face, and murmured faintly to herself.

The sound of her own voice seemed to arouse her, and she arose, drew about her the mantle of Spanish lace that draped her form, and quitted the grotto, walking blindly, as if a film had gathered over her vision.

The fresh air seemed to revive her in part, and she proceeded in the shadow of the trees towards the Castle, anxious to gain the privacy of her own apartments.

She had passed over scarcely half the distance when she encountered Lord Waldemere.

His lordship had been walking about for some time in full view of the grotto, consumed with jealous rage because Richard Layne was holding an interview there with Alethea.

He knew that he was there for the purpose of breaking the news of Arthur's disappearance, but he envied him the happiness of soothing the grief of the young mother, of inspiring her with hope, of holding her hand, and caressing her.

He could only comfort himself with the reflection that the loss of Arthur must be a grief which caresses could not subdue, and which loving words could scarcely alleviate.

When Richard Layne issued from the grotto, bowed down as under a heavy burden, the marquise rejoiced, muttering:

"He feels the loss of his nameless son. I should like to see how Alethea bears it."

But his patience was almost exhausted during his three hours of waiting for her.

He fancied her fainting and ill, and started once or twice to go to the grotto, then checked himself with an impatient exclamation and took a seat under an acacia tree, pretending to be absorbed in a book, which he held upside down.

But when Alethea made her appearance, he was surprised to see so little change in her.

She walked more slowly than usual, and he noticed she had a weary, worn-out air, but her eyes were not red nor swollen with weeping.

"Her heart must be of stone," he muttered.

He approached her so as to intercept her path, and saluted her with a good morning.

Miss Wycherly returned the salutation.

At sight of him, she regained her usual coldness and hauteur, and her countenance was as proud and impassive as ever as she paused for him to move aside.

It was singular that she did not suspect Lord Waldemere of being concerned in the disappearance of the boy, but she did not. Her mind was so preoccupied with thoughts of her own apparent coldness to little Arthur, that she did not even recall the threats of the marquise to wound her through her son.

His lordship had been prepared for reproaches and accusations from her, and he was accordingly surprised that he did not receive them.

"This is a delightful day, Miss Wycherly," he observed, carelessly.

"Is it?" she returned, wearily. "I had not noticed the weather."

"Your excursion yesterday fatigued you greatly, did it not?" inquired the marquise. "You are not looking well this morning."

"I am not feeling very well."

She stepped forward, waving his lordship from her path, but he did not move.

"Permit me a moment's conversation with you, Miss Wycherly," he said. "It is with regard to your invited guest, Sir Wilton Werner: I will be frank enough with you to say that I came here somewhat

upon his account. I heard him mention in town that he expected to become your husband. That remark brought me to the Castle, your unwelcome and uninvited guest."

Alethea bowed.

"My stay here has been lengthened by hearing that Layne was in the neighbourhood. I was considerably astonished to find that he had been living here years, entirely upon your account, and that your relations with him were so intimate that your own niece, the Lady Leopoldo, had contracted the habit of calling him 'Uncle Richard.'"

"Well?"

"A longer stay has given me a keener insight into your affairs. I find that Sir Wilton Werner was not engaged to you at the moment he made the remark that aroused my indignation. I find that you and Richard Layne have quarrelled, or agreed to give each other up. I find that he aspires to the hand of the Lady Ellen Haigh, and that you encourage the attentions of Werner. I was in the conservatory the evening the baronet proposed to you, and I must say that you acted your part well. No timid child of fifteen could have shown more hesitancy or less knowledge of her own heart than you when you solicited time to consider his offer," and the marquise sneered.

"I see nothing wrong in all that, my lord, except your eavesdropping, which was certainly unworthy a gentleman," returned Alethea, coolly.

The marquise coloured, and remarked:

"I doubted that you would accept Sir Wilton, Miss Wycherly, for he does not seem to me to possess the qualities that would win a lady's affections. His early manhood was marked by dissoluteness and stained by many acts from which a true gentleman would recoil. At least, popular report so says. But yesterday your marked preference for him and his triumphant manner convinced me that your long-delayed answer had been given at last, and that you had promised yourself to him in marriage."

"I am free to dispose of myself as I like, I suppose?"

"You are, indeed. But are you really engaged to him, Alethea?"

"I decline answering your question," was the haughty response.

"Then I shall interpret your silence as I please."

"Certainly: you can do as you like. At present," and Miss Wycherly's voice faltered and became uneven, "I am not able to converse farther with you upon the subject. I have a great sorrow that unfits me to defend myself, or even to care what may be said against me."

At this allusion to Arthur's disappearance, the marquise betrayed a self-consciousness, looking confused.

Miss Wycherly was too absorbed in her own grief to notice it.

Lord Waldemere stepped aside, a satisfied look appearing for a single moment in his eyes, and permitted her to pass on.

She went on towards the eastern tower, and he proceeded to the drawing-room.

Admitting herself at the private door, Alethea ascended the secret staircase, passed into her inner chamber, and ascended to the secret suite of rooms that had been occupied by her son during his stay at the Castle.

Here she spent the day in solitude.

She stationed herself by one of the ivy-screened windows, in the intervals of her frenzied pacing to and fro, and watched keenly for the coming of a messenger with tidings.

But she shed no tears.

A stony calm came over her, making her seem more than ever the iceberg she had been called.

Alison brought up her luncheon and was frightened at her singular manner. Miss Wycherly explained to her its cause, and the old waiting-woman wept and bemoaned the disappearance of her mistress's son, and Alethea envied her the power of expressing her sorrow.

"As for me," she said, simply passing her hand wearily over her brows, "I cannot weep. I seem turned to stone!"

She left her food untouched, and went back to the window, while Alison wept for her mistress as well as young Arthur.

Thus the afternoon passed.

It was nearly sunset, and the western sky had begun to be illumined with clouds of crimson and amber, when the keen eyes of Miss Wycherly beheld a horseman approaching the lodge from the direction of Richard Layne's.

As he turned into the avenue, she saw that he was not Richard, but his groom, and in fanned haste she sent old Alison down to the front portico to intercept his message.

"Arthur cannot have been found," she murmured, anxiously. "or Richard would have brought the news. It may be," she added, with sudden hope, "that the

groom has discovered my boy at the ruins, and that Richard is still absent in another direction!"

The minutes that passed before Alison returned seemed like hours.

When she came at last, she brought in her hand a letter.

"There was no message but that, my lady," she said, placing the missive in her hands.

Miss Wycherly tore open the envelope and unfolded the sheet it contained.

The note was from Richard Layne. He stated that nothing had yet been found or heard of Arthur; that he had not been seen at the ruins; that the tramps who had bivouacked there had vanished, and that he should set out in search of them instantly.

"He is lost—my boy is lost to me for ever!" said Miss Wycherly, giving the note into Alison's hands. "We have seen him for the last time, Alison. Oh, my boy, my son!"

The last word was breathed very faintly, and it was scarcely uttered when Alethea took a step forward towards her old nurse, stumbled, and fell senseless into Alison's outstretched arms.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE morning broke clear and beautiful over the Fens.

The air blew softly over the flower-sprinkled moor, bearing with it a balmy fragrance as pure as delicious.

This gentle breeze found its way into Natalie's bed-chamber, through her open window, and lifted the golden tendrils of her hair, caressed her pale cheeks, and aroused her anew to life and its burdens.

With an unconscious sigh, she opened her blue eyes and looked around her.

She had been visited by a strange, sweet dream, and the awakening from it was not pleasant.

In her sleep she had imagined herself the presiding genius of a beautiful home, where loving attentions were heaped upon her, where loving eyes watched over her, and where a loving heart depended for happiness upon her smiles.

The home she had pictured was not the lofty mansion of Lord Templecombe's ancestral home, nor was his the love of which she had dreamed.

Instead of grandeur, she had dreamed of a gray-stone farmhouse, with steep pitched roofs, gable windows, rustic porches—one of those charming homes where the beautiful combines with the useful—and he whom she imagined as sharing that home was Hugh Fauld.

As she awakened and recalled her dream, her cheeks flushed, and she murmured:

"How could I have had such a dream, when I have no such fancies when awake? How could I have dreamed such a thing when I am the wife of another?"

Again she sighed, and a shadow overspread her face.

Without attempting to analyze her feelings, she sprang from her bed, and commenced her toilet.

When this had been accomplished she flung open her windows to admit the breeze, and proceeded to pack her trunk, that she might be in readiness to depart.

When this had been done, she descended to the portico, and seated herself upon the steps, looking upon the pleasant moor, and avoiding the sight of the marsh and the sullen river in which she had so nearly terminated her existence the previous evening.

She had sat thus some time in a state of dreamy unconsciousness, enjoying the sunlight, the fragrance, and the bird-music, when she was joined by Linnet, who seated herself humbly at Natalie's feet, looking up into her face with affectionate gaze.

"Nata-lee looks troubled," she said, sympathizingly. "Tell Linnet what troubles her. Has anyone looked cross at Nata-lee?"

The young wife replied in the negative, and Linnet resumed:

"Shall we walk among the flowers and birds now, Nata-lee? They are all happy this morning, because the sun smiles on them."

"We will not go this morning, Linnet," said Natalie, gently. "I think we shall never go over the moor again together. I must leave you."

"Leave me, Nata-lee?" and Linnet's eyes filled with tears, and a frightened, sad expression gathered in her face. "What has Linnet done?"

It required all the tact at Natalie's command to soothe the suddenly awakened grief of the "daft girl," and she carefully avoided betraying to her her intended departure, deeming it best to take her leave suddenly.

By the time she had succeeded in recalling the smile to Linnet's mouth, she became aware of the approach of Hugh Fauld, who had come very near to the Fens without having been observed.

The sound of wheels first caught her attention, and on perceiving the vehicle whose approach they announced, she arose and went down to the gate, which she flung hospitably open.

A minute later, Hugh Fauld drove into the garden.

He bowed to her gravely, scanning her face earnestly for signs of mental or physical suffering, and then sprang from his seat and walked beside her to the porch, guiding his horses as he went.

His manner had greatly changed since the previous evening.

He had evidently struggled with himself and come off conqueror, for his manner was that of a father or elder brother, and his glances were calm and grave, with nothing of his great love for her manifest in them.

Natalie felt a strange sense of relief as she noticed this change—but she also felt a pang of disappointment.

Rebuking herself for this feeling, she passed on to the portico, while Hugh took care of his horses.

He soon returned to her, and was introduced to Linnet, for whose presence Natalie was thankful, as the earl's deserted wife felt a singular embarrassment in the presence of her discarded lover.

She could not resist the conviction that she had flung away the rough but genuine diamond for mere glittering paste, and, despite all her efforts, the thought would return—if Hugh had only made his love known to her before Lord Templecombe had come to trouble her existence!

Her embarrassment was soon dissipated under the fatherly manner of Hugh, and she felt quite at her ease when old Elspeth sounded the breakfast-bell.

He gave her his arm and conducted her into the dining-room, placing her in her chair, and taking his seat opposite, in the most matter-of-course way, not betraying in the least the joyful thrill it gave him to feel the pressure of her hand upon his arm, or to sit where he could feast his eyes upon her fair and delicate face.

They lingered over their coffee and toast, Hugh desiring to prolong the meal as much as possible, as it might be the last at which they should ever sit together, and Natalie desiring to defer to the latest moment her parting with poor Linnet.

But the repast terminated at last.

There was no longer an excuse for trifling with the dainties before them, and they were about to arise when Linnet entered.

Natalie beckoned the girl, who obeyed the summons with smiling alacrity.

"Linnet, dear," began the earl's wife, nervously, deeming it best to come to the point at once, "I am going away from the Fens. I am going to leave you now, this very morning!"

Linnet looked incredulous, but sobered under the grave, sad look of Natalie, and scanned the dress of the latter, observing that Natalie now wore the same blue robe as on the occasion of their first meeting.

"Do you really mean to leave Linnet, Nata-lee?" she asked, plaintively.

The earl's wife replied only by a bow of assent.

It would be a painful task to describe the grief of the daft maiden when she fully comprehended that her friend intended to desert her.

She wept and moaned, clinging to Natalie as though she would detain her by force, until the old housekeeper's attention was excited, and she drew near to witness the scene.

"Why not take her with you, Natalie?" suggested Hugh, as he walked towards the window.

"I do not believe her grandmother would allow her to go," was the reply, in a perplexed tone.

Hugh turned about, coming back to the table, and demanded of Linnet if she would like to accompany her friend.

The girl's brow cleared immediately, her face became transfigured with joy, and she eagerly exclaimed:

"Yes, I will go with Nata-lee; the birds and the flowers go away when the frosts and snows come, and the frost seems to be here when I think of Nata-lee's going," and she laid her hands over her heart. "Nata-lee will take me where other flowers and birds come, and she will never go away and leave poor Linnet all alone for always."

Old Elspeth had been watching her grand-daughter curiously, and now demanded the cause of her excitement.

Hugh possessed a stentorian voice, and he informed the deaf old woman that her mistress would leave the Fens immediately, and that she desired to take Linnet with her.

"As her maid?" questioned Old Elspeth.

Hugh nodded.

A look of gratification appeared on the housekeeper's face, and she said:

"I'm willing she should go, my lady. She's no help to me—been out on the moor all the time—and

if you can make her useful, I'm glad on't. It'll be a comfort to me to know that she is provided for, and that I won't have her to look after. 'Taint likely she'll earn the salt to her porridge, but your ladyship knows what she is and won't be blaming me!" So the matter was settled, to the infinite joy of Linnet.

Hugh brought down Natalie's trunk, while the deserted wife put on her bonnet and tied on her veil.

Adieux were then said to old Elspeth, who followed her mistress to the porch, and Natalie was assisted to her place.

She had scarcely seated herself when Linnet came up, radiant with a fresh wreath of flowers on her head, and with a quaint white cape crossed over her breast—an article that had been borrowed from her grandmother.

She embraced the old housekeeper in a passive sort of way, and then climbed into the vehicle, ignoring Hugh's proffered assistance, and nestling close to Natalie's side as though that place were her rightful home.

Hugh then took his seat, the horses started, and they passed out of the garden and upon the moor.

(To be continued.)

MENDENHALL.

"Greta the Magnificent" people named her; she had such a grand and queenly air—such a fashion of ruling everybody, from Rose Mendenhall, her little heiress cousin, to the highest and mightiest dignitaries in the county.

Strangers always took her for the heiress instead of Rose, and most, when they found their mistake, were sorry that it was not as they first thought.

Ah, she was so beautiful, this Greta; she had such a clear, fine complexion; she had such great bright, strong eyes, her hair was so long, so silken, so abundant, so wavy and so golden; she had such a tall, elegant shape, such feet and hands, such a charming way—she was perfection, in short, but it was the perfection of art, not nature.

Few would look twice at Rose when Greta was near, although Rose was the heiress and Greta had no money. Some did look at Rose, however, and those who got beyond that crust of shyness and reserve in which she enveloped herself mostly, discovered, to their surprise, as much sweetness as pertains to the lovely blossom after which she was named.

Rose Mendenhall was little, and dark-skinned as a gipsy, slender and fairylike in her proportions, timid and childlike in her disposition, devoted in her attachments, and satisfied that her cousin Greta was the most perfect person in the world. Nothing that pertained to Rose belonged to her so much as to Greta.

Greta was far more mistress of Mendenhall than Rose was, and by Rose's choice. An imperious mistress she made, too.

Greta had lovers by the score—country squires and red-faced justices—though there were no desirable matches, and Greta the Magnificent pined for a lover who should be worthy her charms and talents.

Her one dread was lest Rose should marry before she had secured a lordly enough home to atone for banishment from the splendours of Mendenhall. She rightly calculated that a lord at Mendenhall would be a very different institution from little Rose.

There was a letter that Rose's father had left behind for her which troubled Greta much. This letter told Rose that he had a friend so dearly loved that it would almost be happiness to him in his grave to have that love perpetuated by a marriage between his daughter and his friend's son.

This son would be of age when Rose was eighteen. He would then, in obedience to his father's wishes, visit her and if the affections of each remained at their disposal, they might, perhaps, bestow them according to the dearest wishes of the two parents.

There was nothing authoritative in the letter—nothing binding upon either party. It was only a fondly expressed wish, but, as such, would be law to the generous and impulsive Rose, as Greta well knew.

Rose, however, had never, as yet, seen this letter, nor did she know of its existence. Greta retained it in her own possession, and looked forward, with alternate misgiving and eagerness, to the advent of this rival to her rule.

She knew he was heir to a sufficiently barren patrimony, so that to win him from Rose would not be worth her while.

But would he be of pliable mould?—of that temper which a wave of her white hand should govern? She knit her graceful brows over this problem indefinitely, but nothing came of it till she beheld the young man himself.

Alas, then, for Greta the Magnificent! She might

put her foot on the necks of the county devotees, but here was one who looked more than a match for her wiles.

Bruce Oldroyd stood full six feet two; he had an eye like an eagle's.

He was as handsome, as gallant, as gay, as chivalrous, as noble of mien and commanding of presence as a prince in a fairy tale.

Greta Landsell saw him as he came up the avenue, and her heart sank like lead; but she rallied, and donned her bravest attire for him, and her loveliest smiles.

As it chanced, Rose was away for a few days, and young Oldroyd made the same mistake others had done in supposing that he beheld the heiress instead of Greta, she having purposely dropped her voice beyond distinguishing in introducing herself.

Never had such a vision of beauty dawned upon Bruce Oldroyd as Greta was then, seen in the half light of the morning room, her queenly graces exquisitely veiled with just the amount of consciousness his young intended would be expected to display—the colour coming faintly in her cheek, golden shadows shimmering down her lovely head, and scarlet smiles wreathing her moist lips.

And then, when she lifted those large white lids, with what strange sweet eyes she looked at him.

He fell madly in love with her in the first half-hour.

It was not love so much as it was giddy intoxication—swift, sweet, subtle, enthralling.

By the next day Greta told him his mistake, and like those before him, he was sorry it was a mistake. It was not so bad, however. He might still love and marry whom he pleased, and it was not likely it would be any other than Greta if she would love him.

But Greta would not love him—at least so she told him, standing in the purple evening light, with drooped lids that contradicted most flatly what the scarlet lips had just said; and then she let her white hand flutter to the eager clasp of his, and looking up to him with eyes of mingled sadness, and smiling, said softly:

"Wedding joys are not for two such poorlings as you and I. We may love, but we may not marry."

"Why not?" clasping her swiftly to him and looking reproachfully into her dangerous eyes.

She shook her head.

"You may despise me—you will, but I cannot live without this luxury—it is necessary to me; without it I should die like a bird lost in a northern winter."

She had drooped her face to his shoulder, so she did not see the shadowy pain that crossed his face.

She disengaged herself presently from his embrace.

"You will marry Rose, my darling; you ought to marry Rose—she is my niece."

Bruce Oldroyd made a gesture of impatience, and extended his arms for Greta to come back to them. But she said no more, retreating from him, and smiling sadly as she went.

That night Rose came; but Bruce Oldroyd had no eyes for her, and she shrank away from him as she did from all strangers. Greta and he were always together, she tightening her toils about him with each day, siren that she was.

Rose watched them, sometimes, through vistas in wood or shrubbery, or through half-closed lattices, and the child's sweet eyes filled with slow tears as she looked. How beautiful Cousin Greta was, and—
and Bruce Oldroyd.

Would anybody ever love her, she wondered, as Bruce Oldroyd loved Cousin Greta? It wasn't likely.

Cousin Greta surprised these musings one day and gave her a queer look. Rose was looking pale—she was always so, but Greta had eyes sharp enough to see that this was something more than usual.

"Why do you hold your hand to your side in that way, Rose?" she demanded, sharply.

"It is nothing," Rose said, "not worth talking about."

Greta watched for a moment.

"Her mother died suddenly," she thought; "I have myself been warned that a sudden shock might develop something. She looks more like it than I," with a proud glance in the pier-glass opposite at the reflection of her superb beauty. There was no pallor there.

"Rose loves you, Bruce," Greta said, softly, to her lover, half an hour after.

"Rose? Tush!"

"It is true. You had better marry her."

Bruce Oldroyd turned upon her with a haughty flash:

"I may do so yet, Greta—don't press me too hard."

Greta's scarlet lips parted in a slow smile, and she watched him languidly through half-closed lids.

"I believe you would not care a heart-throb if I did," he said, angrily.

Greta laughed. She meant to provoke him.

"Tell me that over again, and I will make you the sorriest—"

"Never threaten a woman, Bruce."

"If you ever tell me to marry Rose again I will do it, so help me—"

That night there was company at Mendenhall—some of Greta's old admirers among them—and she smiled upon them till Oldroyd's blood was on fire with jealous anger, and he looked for Rose in sheer spite.

Darling little Rose.

How her face glowed under his look, how her shy, soft eyes trembled away from his, and her cheek grew hot and cold by turns.

Reckless Bruce Oldroyd madly trifled with one heart that he might wring another, as his own was being wrung.

Greta watched him furtively, and he, thinking she was touched at last, bent lower still to look in Rose's sweet eyes, and cadenced his voice to more lover-like tones.

"Oh, Greta, such a happy evening," murmured Rose, as her cousin twined her false arms about her that night at the hour of retiring.

For answer, the false red lips kissed her, and went away, smiling cruelly.

In a few days there was company again—Greta again in her rôle of coquette, and Rose happy in Bruce Oldroyd's smile. Then they all went to see a review some miles away, and Greta rode with one of her squires, and made such work of it this time that Bruce, maddened by her coquetries, lost temper and colour completely.

He was at her side as she galloped up the bank, crowding between her and her escort like a crazy man.

"You are trying purposely to vex me," he said, with an ashen face.

"I?" quite innocently.

"Give it over, Greta, or—"

"Don't be a simpleton, Bruce. You and I have had our game; let us cry quits, and go our own ways."

"Are you going to marry that blockhead, Greta?"

"It is not unlikely. You will marry Rose, of course."

Bruce set his teeth, and looked swiftly over his shoulder. "That blockhead" had gone to Rose's rescue.

"If you say the word, I will," he said, with a stifled imprecation.

"I say it:" the voice was clear, sweet, impassive.

"Cousin Greta, I thought he loved you," Rose whispered that night, hiding her little face on Greta's shoulder.

"He has asked you to marry him?" questioned Greta, with an involuntary sinking of heart that she could have shook herself for.

"Yes, Greta; oh, and I am so happy. I love him so."

"She will relent now," thought Bruce Oldroyd; "she will never see me go through this thing without giving a sign. May the pangs of jealousy devour her heart as they have mine."

But Greta was strong. She gave no sign. She suffered some, but she knew too well that one softening look would burst the web she had woven with so much toil.

He would have been at her feet, regardless of honour, Rose, everything but the passion with which she enthralled him, and the time was not come yet for that. He and Rose must be married first. She would see him lord of Mendenhall, and then—

She caught her breath with a strange, sharp pang, and sat down with a scared look.

"I am agitating myself too much," she thought, gravely. "I did not think I had heart enough to ache. My prince, if you knew how I loved you, but I love splendour more, and—ugh! this odd pain—I must keep cool. I have not slept enough of late. I must take care of myself, or I may not live to be mistress of Mendenhall."

What a *troussens* Rose had! Exuberant of taste and vitality, with ample means at her command, and eagerly seconded by Greta, who seemed animated by a feverish excitement of haste, the wedding wardrobe grew to perfection, the wedding feast was ready, the priest and guests summoned.

"She will soften at the last—she must soften before it is too late," said Bruce Oldroyd to himself. "I will go to the end if she do not."

It was a splendid wedding, the bridegroom gallant and handsome beyond compare; the bride looking like an angel in her happiness and misty bridal robes. Both were pale, but that is so common at weddings. Greta was first bridesmaid, and looking so handsome that it took one's breath away to look at her.

If Greta the Magnificent ever had condescended to such a thing, I should have said she was painted on this day; there was a deadly pallor on her brow, such vivid bloom upon her cheeks; and her lips were like threads of scarlet fire.

The bridegroom did not once look towards her, nor she at him; but her eyes burned under their white lids, like tropic suns.

She divided the homage of the room even with the sweet girl-bride.

People's eyes followed her as though spellbound. Never had she so charmed and dazzled in a breath. She looked queen of Mendenhall; and so she meant to be.

Under all that witching look and manner lurked no softness.

The guests began to depart, and presently Greta vanished.

The bridal chambers were in the east wing; a suite of grand and stately apartments set apart from time immemorial for the Mendenhall brides. They had been refitted exquisitely for Rose, and now, clad in the soft twilight of alabaster shaded lamps, serene and lovely as their mistresses, they waited her coming.

As first bridesmaid, it was Greta's right to enter here first, and she came, pacing slowly the length of the entire suite, till her own maid, a quick little Frenchwoman, came to her, nodded significantly, and was gone. Greta caught her breath and stood still in the centre of the room, the lamps shimmering white light about her, she drooping like an exquisite statue in their midst.

As a step sounded near, and Bruce Oldroyd, summoned by the French maid, came into the room alone, Greta dropped to the snowy carpet, and lay like a piece of sculptured marble.

It was superb acting.

Thus she might have looked if her heart had indeed burst with agony; her perfectly moulded arms tossed wildly before her, her features drawn, her face ghastly as death.

The young bridegroom sprang forward with a sharp cry, and caught her in his arms, murmuring passionate words of endearment, and showering kisses upon her cold face. She opened her eyes at that, and clung to him with her white hands, calling him fond names.

In the midst, true to her rôle, the maid brought Rose noiselessly beside them.

"Bruce! my husband! Oh! why did you marry me, then?" she said, with a cry that smote Bruce Oldroyd to the heart. For the first time glancing aside at the little white swaying figure, he realized what an unutterably wicked thing he had done—what a dishonest, unmanly, cowardly wrong he had done a woman who had been weak enough to love him.

Woe to the woman who tempts a man to the loss of his own self-respect! Woe to the woman for whom a man sells his honour, and loathes himself for his shame! Ten chances to one he will include her in the loathing, sooner or later.

Bruce Oldroyd loosened his clasp of Greta with a groan; his arms dropped away from her like lead. He stood with face averted, and stern.

"He has married you, but he loves me, Rose," she said, pitilessly. The cruel words stung even him.

He shook her off as though she had been a viper. Greta stood up and looked at him, a sudden and awful fright in her great eyes.

Then Bruce Oldroyd crossed to where Rose had shrunk, and gathered his wife in his strong arms.

"I have married her and I love her; I will be a true husband to the woman I have chosen so long as we both live!"

Greta moved slowly towards them, her face rigid, her hands clasped tightly over her heart.

"She will not live long," she said, deliberately. "I knew she had the seeds of sudden death in her bosom, or I should never have urged you to marry her. I will be mistress of Mendenhall yet!"

"It is false!" said Rose's husband, with a look of horror and loathing at the woman who had made such a tool of him. "I love Rose; she shall not die."

Greta stood a moment, her great eyes slowly dilating with some solemn and awful meaning. Then she turned and crossed the room again with dragging step, and dropped languidly into a great white velvet chair, and shut her eyes. Twice she cried out sharply, and the hand upon the snowy cushion clenched and unclenched itself.

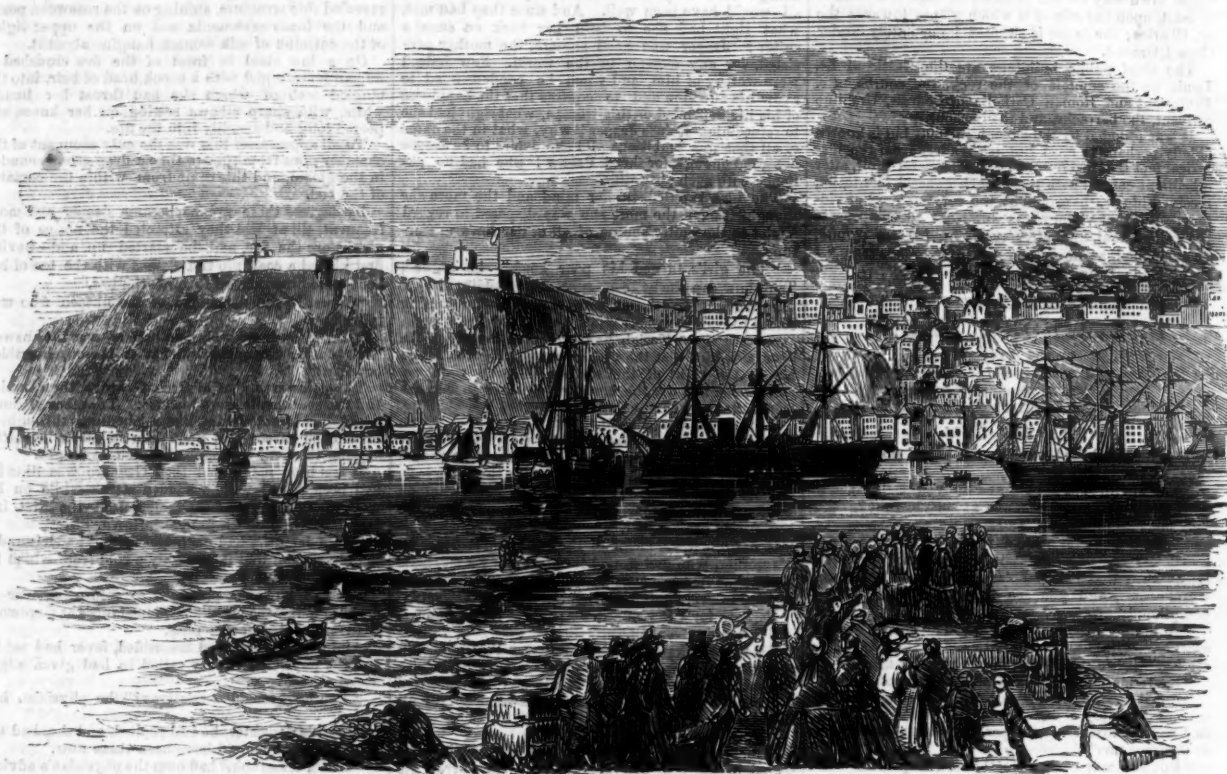
That was all.

"Ah, monsieur—the mademoiselle; she love you so, her heart break! She have one heart disease dose months; I tell her so, but she not believe me! Now it break! she die!"

It was the little French maid who had come in like a shadow to find her mistress dead in her chair—dead of the very fate she had intended for another.

Rose inherited her father's constitution, not her mother's, and she lived to be devotedly loved by her husband a life through.

C. C.



[THE CITY OF QUEBEC, LOWER CANADA.]

THE GREAT FIRE OF QUEBEC.

GREAT FIRES, like earthquakes and revolutions, serve to mark epochs in the histories of countries; but terrible as are their immediate consequences, they serve to teach men the folly of building their houses on sand, or, in other words, of wood: again, they carry with them the consolation that succeeding generations will reap benefit from their sufferings, if only that masses of ill-constructed, fever-breeding dwellings give place to wider streets, more commodious, better-constructed houses, and therefore a purer atmosphere, and consequently better health. Let us repeat, then, that this consolation has attended all great fires, and we may enumerate the following:—That of London in 1666, which began in Pudding Lane, and ended at Pie Corner, and not only gave to Englishmen a new London, but, humanly speaking, helped to drive away the "Plague;" that of Peru in 1709, when 13,000 houses were destroyed; the fire of Canton, in China, which consumed 15,000 houses; that of St. Petersburg in 1862, when property was lost to the amount of £1,000,000; that of Montreal in 1852, when 1,200 houses were destroyed; that of Quebec, when 1,650 houses were burned; still more terrible, that in the same city of Quebec in 1846, when at the burning of the theatre some 47 persons were destroyed; and even still more terrible, that of the cathedral at Lima some year or two since, when so many hundreds of women were burned.

The last of these catastrophes—and which, from the fact that it is the last, and some 25,000 persons have been thrown upon the charity of the world thereby—was the great fire of Quebec, which took place on Sunday, the 14th of October last, and which desolated completely about one-third part of the city, destroying, it is estimated, nearly 2,500 houses, and rendering, as we have before said, some 25,000 people homeless—an extent of damage that is calculated at between 2,500,000 and 3,000,000 dollars. The portions of the city which have suffered thus severely are the suburbs of St. Ruth and St. Sauveur, consisting almost entirely of small wooden houses, and inhabited chiefly by the poorer class of French Canadians.

Accounting for the origin of the fire, an "eye-witness" says:

"It appears that a number of men had been making a night of it the evening before in one of these small houses, and, contrary to regulation, had continued their revels up to 4 o'clock on Sunday morning, about which hour they began fighting, and

upset the table, on which was an oil-lamp, and this breaking to pieces, quickly set fire to the room. The dry combustible material and a very strong wind united in spreading the flames with alarming rapidity; but when the firemen arrived the water supply was found to be inefficient, and what there was of it some ruffian rendered useless by mischievously or maliciously cutting the hose. The consequence was that the best moments for effectual action were lost, and from this time all attempts at extinguishing the flames were vain."

"About 7 o'clock the fury of the fire was terrific, and the mayor sent to Lord Alexander Russell, requesting instant assistance from the military. This was at once complied with, and a detachment of the Rifle Brigade and Artillery were soon on the spot. The men set to work immediately and with a will, blowing up and tearing down houses as fast as they could, to arrest the frightful progress of the flames. But in spite of the most vigorous exertions of the soldiers, who did all that energy could do, human power was of no avail. The flames made sport of all resistance—they were beyond mastery or control, and the wretched inhabitants seemed to comprehend that nothing remained to be done but to save whatever they could get out of their houses before they were swept down.

"By 12 o'clock the surrounding grass-plats presented the appearance of a vast fair, the ground being everywhere strewn with furniture of all kinds—for owners of houses far removed from the actual fire, in anticipation of their doom, had taken to emptying their rooms, and calmly awaited the furious enemy that was carving its inevitable way onwards, and which the violent wind was determined should sweep away their habitations from the earth. And a most consummate devastation it speedily effected. When, about 1 o'clock, I ascended Mount Pleasant, some rising ground close above, most woeful, though grand, was the sight I beheld.

"Far as the eye could see, from the mount across to the river St. Charles, was one advancing sea of lurid flame, the smoke of which rolled densely and incessantly upwards, spreading the heavens with a gigantic cloud of dully glaring light. In the midst of all this burning a large church shone out, high above everything else, the priests, who had been vainly bearing about their sacred image, having at length desisted and fled. The ruins of a convent, the inmates of which had withdrawn with their sacred treasures, and were engaged in comforting the forlorn outcasts around them, were smoking at its side.

"On all sides of this mighty plain of fire, on the

hill-side and in the meadows beneath, was congregated a host of exiles, who, sitting round their remnant property, were fixedly, listlessly watching, first the igniting spark that ruthlessly flew across the street on to their roof; then, but a moment or two after, the charred earth, on which a solitary brick chimney, blackened and defaced, alone marked the spot where their dwelling had stood. A stupor came over them at the sight, and the fire went on in its devastating march. I saw many a poor mother seated there with a lot of shuddering little ones half wrapped in blankets, or whatever she might have saved, at her side, all turning fearful, dismayed eyes upon their perishing homes; while cats and pigs and animals of all kinds were running frantically about in all directions—many, in their fright, into the very flames.

"Next morning, early, I revisited the spot. The fire had burnt itself out about five o'clock in the afternoon, after only about thirteen hours' work of destruction. The smoke had nearly cleared away, allowing a melancholy, painful view. A large forest of chimneys stood before me, acre upon acre, outside which the white tents which had been lent by the soldiers glistened in strong contrast with the black wilderness that so few hours before was all alive with the hum and business of that ejected multitude."

The chief portion of the poor creatures thus bereaved and distressed are, it appears, almost exclusively labourers, who are engaged in the manufacture of timber and in the construction of ships for the English market. Hardworking, intelligent, and skilful with the axe, they earn a bare subsistence during the summer in the coves and shipyards round Quebec. Some are fortunate enough to be retained by their employers during the winter, and out of the ranks of these have been enrolled several most efficient companies of volunteers. But the larger portion of axemen find themselves at the close of the navigation without work and without money.

The city of Quebec, of which we this week give a view, and which is the North American capital of Lower Canada, is situated on a promontory of the "St. Lawrence," formed by that river and the St. Charles, 400 miles from the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The ridge of land on which it stands is from one to two miles broad. It has Cape Diamond, a bold promontory, on the north, and across it, at the north-east, or lower end, the town of Quebec is built. The fortifications, which extend across the breadth of the peninsula, have a current of about two miles and a half, and are divided into two parts, namely, the Upper and Lower. The

upper town may be said to stand on Cape Diamond—at least, upon the side of it which slopes towards the St. Charles; the lower is situated immediately under Cape Diamond.

The chief public buildings are the Castle of St. Louis on the summit of the rock, the court-house, Protestant and Roman Catholic cathedrals, Ursuline convent, the barracks, and the harbour.

It was founded by the French in 1608, but is known chiefly perhaps to most English readers from the historical fact that in 1759 the gallant General Wolf, after a brilliant contest with the French general, Montcalm, received his death-wound at the very moment of victory. But that victory was sufficient to compensate the gallant soul, and after receiving his last wound, he exclaimed, as he turned his eyes to heaven, "I thank God; I die contented."

THE WRONG DRESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Golden Mask," "The Stranger's Secret," "Man and His Ideal," "The Warning Voice," &c., &c.

CHAPTER LVII.

THE mother heard, but the words had no sting in them for her loving heart.

"You are ill," she said, "and do you think I will trust my boy to strange hands at such a time?—and they may neglect you, and—you may grow worse, and—oh, if I should lose you!"

"Better so," was the bitter response; "pray for that. Pray that I may die and pass away before the worst comes, and you are disgraced beyond all redemption."

"A mother disgraced by her son?" she answered, quickly. "Impossible! What am I? Nothing. It is my boy—it is Jasper Newton, of the great firm—"

"Spare me, mother, spare me that," he interposed.

"But it is. Who knows me or cares for me? Your success is the joy of my life; but all that is unknown, as I am unknown. No, Jasper, you cannot wrong me or disgrace me."

"But you may come to loathe and despise me—"

"No! Never while I have breath. Mine is a mother's love, Jasper, and that has no limits. Nothing can try it beyond endurance. Nothing can destroy it."

"Not crime?"

She shuddered at the word; but mastered her emotion, and took his hand.

"A mother's love," she repeated, as if in those words were summed up the whole force and power of argument, and having uttered them, she sat, tenderly preening the feverish head she held in both hers, as if it had been the head of an innocent babe.

Singularly touching was this instance of maternal affection triumphing over those obstacles which would have been fatal to friendship, and crushing down even the horror a great crime is calculated to inspire. As she sat by the bedside the poor widow recalled the scenes of the past, from the time when her orphan boy would sit at her knees in the quiet fire-light in the old home, and, unconscious of it himself, fill her heart with inexpressible happiness. In bright review there passed before her those scenes of late years when his rare talents, previously developing made him the wonder of the school, and later still when he began to mount the ladder of life and attained at a leap the proud position on which she had never tired of dwelling.

And now what a contrast to all this his present position afforded.

Stricken down in his prime and with the shadow of a great offence upon him, he was an object from which everyone save a mother would have shrunk in dismay. But she had no thought of abandoning him. She felt that his place was at her side in weal or woe, in the hour of danger as in the hour of prosperity, her only source of apprehension being lest they should insist on separating them.

While his hand still rested in that of his mother the criminal slowly lapsed off into a quiet slumber—more quiet and placid than any he had known since his apprehension.

Delighted at this, the widow hardly suffered herself to breathe lest she should disturb him, and when after a while he began to mutter in his sleep her dread lest he should awake too soon was expressed in every line of her face.

Once only that expression changed.

It was when in his mutterings the name of "Violet" came to his lips, tenderly, sacredly, yet reproachfully breathed.

The fond mother had not a word to breathe against Violet Maldon. She owned her beauty and her goodness; but the sound of her name aroused a jealous and impatient feeling.

What did it matter how good and beautiful she was, since she had been the cause of Jasper's un-

doing? Had it pleased heaven they had never met, all would have been well. And since they had met, what right had she to turn her back on such a savior? Jasper was good enough, the mother persisted, for any woman in the world. Few indeed were worthy of him, and when he condescended to avow his affection and to confess that the happiness of his life depended on this woman, what right had she to refuse him. Refuse Jasper! why, what in the name of all that was ambitious did she aspire to? Jasper not good enough for her! Pahaw! She had no patience with such absurdity.

The idea rankled in her mind, and the more she thought it over the more she was disposed to regard Violet as the guilty source of all of her son's misfortune.

"The girl's turned his poor head," she argued, "and how can she be responsible for her doings?"

In thoughts like these the hours passed—the evening closed in—night came.

Several times Kessiah had presented herself at the door, as a hint that the visitor was staying too long; but at the sight of the sleeper and the watching mother she had not the heart to give utterance to the words that rose to her lips.

So the mother remained.

The room was intensely quiet. Only the regular breathing of the sleeper was heard in it. The shades of evening declined till far awhile, then the moon rose, and its light passed in through the half-curtained window, of which it wrought a pattern, partly on the bed, partly on the floor.

A not unusual effect of the calm and stiffness on his mother, who had passed through many a sleepless night, was that her eyes closed, and that she herself yielded to overcoming drowsiness, and slept.

Perhaps for a few minutes—perhaps for an hour.

She could never tell.

All that she knew of the matter was that suddenly she lost consciousness of the quiet chamber filled with the moonlight, and that suddenly she was startled back to life by a great cry, which seemed to fill all the night.

It was Jasper who uttered it.

And, starting up, she saw him, no longer lying, but seated in the bed, his face ghastly with horror, his eyes starting, his whole frame convulsed.

"Oh, Jasper! what ails you?" she exclaimed, entreatingly.

"There! there! No, 'tis gone!"

His face was turned towards the window, and his hands pointed to it as he spoke.

"Gone! What have you seen?" said the mother.

"His face!"

"His? Whose?"

"The face of—of the dead!"

"No! Impossible!"

"But I tell you—"

"You did but dream, Jasper."

"Not so. I was awake. I saw it, I saw it, clear, distinct, shining in the moonlight."

"You believe so—"

"I know it. I will stake my life upon it. Don't leave me—not for a moment! I can face the living, but the dead—No, no; I dare not be alone with them. Not with the dead!"

In the excess of his terror he trembled so that the very room shook.

The commotion attracted the attention of Fallom, who was in the room below, and who suddenly presented himself at the door.

"Thank heaven, you are here!" the agitated man exclaimed. "Take me to the copple beyond the village. Let me satisfy myself that the dead is in his grave."

The constable listened in amazement. His first impression was that his prisoner was deranged; but on questioning him he found that his statement was perfectly coherent, and partly with an eye to evidence, partly to soothe and pacify the excited man, he gave his promise that as soon as the doctor gave his permission the visit to the Beschden Copple should be made.

CHAPTER LVIII.

GASPARO'S CONFESSION.

The guilty thoughts ran through his mind

As lurid as burning coals,

While anguish streaked through his withered frame

Like the pains in murderers' souls.

S. H. Bradbury.

A FIRE burned redly in the low grate of a dingy chamber pertaining to one of the oldest and most reputable of inns in the metropolis.

It was a bed-room in the fullest sense of the word, the greater portion of it being overpaved by a huge bedstead, in which kings might have been born or died, so huge and cumbersome and imposing was it—so much more in keeping with the supposed requirements of the dead than of the living.

So dim was the light of the fire that it only faintly revealed this structure, shining on the rosewood posts, and the brass ornaments, and on the upper lights of the curtains of silk damask hanging about it.

On a low stool in front of the fire crouched a human form, a girl with a shock head of hair, into the tangled web of which she had thrust her hands, while, with sharp elbows resting on her knees, she peered long and steadily into the fire.

To all appearance this was the only occupant of the chamber; but from time to time a deep groan sounded in the gloom, and this came from within the curtains of the bed.

By degrees these groans became deeper and more frequent, till at last they attracted the notice of the girl before the fire, and she started up, and—having first kicked a coal into the flames with the toe of her boot—she drew herself towards the bed.

"Worse?" she demanded of the unseen who was lying there.

"No, Tadge: no worse, no better," was the answer. "It's death, death, that's what it is—oh, horrible! horrible!"

The voice was that of Occo Gasparo, the chemist, and the sentiments were his also. That face of death which had haunted him like a phantom throughout his wicked career was upon him in all its intensity, helping the very end against which he fought.

It has been mentioned that Gasparo was ill. He had been seized with a sudden attack while on his way to London, and had stayed at the first inn familiar to him on his arrival in town.

There Jacintha had visited him; but had left under the impression that it was only a cold from which he would recover.

She had, however, promised to return at once—a promise which the peculiar circumstances at Gorewood Place prevented her keeping.

And now the cold had intensified, fever had set in, and the physician hastily called in had given slight hopes of recovery.

"You have friends—relations?" the physician had asked.

Only his daughter, he had replied, and she, had she kept her word, should have been there now.

"Better telegraph," had been the physician's advice.

To his surprise it was received angrily, even fiercely.

No! She had promised. Let her keep her promise, or take the consequences of her neglect. If the natural feelings of a daughter's heart did not bring her to his side he would not offer her the bribe of his death and the fortune it would bring her. Not he! On that ground he was firm to obstinacy.

And as day after day passed this feeling intensified, rankled, and festered in his heart, till like a poisonous weed it destroyed every natural feeling that should have had its growth there.

In one respect the physician was at fault—death did not result so rapidly as he had expected.

But even this was seized on by the petulant old man as an additional ground of complaint against his daughter.

"I might have been dead and in my grave before she came to look after me!" he had said, and the bitterness of this reflection was intensified by a conviction of its perfect truth as derived from his own feelings towards others.

Even to Jacintha he had only given a half-love.

She was his daughter, and so she had a sort of natural claim on him—a claim which in the heyday of life he had grudgingly admitted. But he had never taken pains to make her lovable or to inspire love in her heart.

Yet such are the caprices of old age that now, on his death-bed, he resented her indifference as if it had been the height of ingratitude. He expected to reap the love he had not sown—to receive in his last hours the disinterested fondness and tender care due to one of the best and most devoted of parents.

Because he did not receive this his feelings were of the most indignant and vindictive character.

That he would disinheritor her was the least of the unnatural resolves that filled his heart.

And as time went on and the end grew nearer this determination strengthened, just as all the other conditions of his mind intensified—among the rest, that terror of death which had always haunted him. This was in part remorse, in some degree also it resulted from a special cause. The remorse was the result of long years of iniquity, cruelty and wrong-doing, which he feared he should be called on to answer for in another world. So far early religious training in a Catholic country had its hold upon him, reviving at the last, after a life of indifference, and under the influence of this he had become anxious to make such restitution and atonement for his past misdeeds as was practicable in a short time.

This had led, in a curious manner, to Tadge's presence at that hour.

Among those whom he had most injured and per-

secuted was Violet Maldon, and there was this peculiar atrocity about the act that Maldon, her father, had been an old friend and had left Gasparo in a position of trust, commending his daughter to the Italian's care with his latest breath.

How he had discharged that solemn trust we have seen. He used his power simply to plunder and harm the orphan he had sworn to foster and watch over. The recollection of this atrocity did not help to sweeten his dying hours, and therefore one of his last acts had been to send for Violet—whose retreat one of his spies had discovered for him—praying her to come and forgive him for his misdeeds. Naturally enough, Violet refused to credit his messenger or to put herself again in his power; but she secretly despatched Tadge to ascertain what truth there was in the old man's statement, and Tadge, finding that he was really dying, had consented to remain with him, meanwhile communicating to her young mistress the real position of affairs.

Often in her long and patient watching poor Tadge had been doomed to listen to the old man's groaning lamentations at his approaching end; but never had he displayed such excess of horror as on this particular night.

His moments were in truth numbered, and he knew it.

"Another hour," he muttered, "and what will become of me?"

"You asked the same yesterday," said his attendant. "Aye, aye; but I'm nearer now—nearer now. I always did fear death. Always from a boy, when I'd better have courted it. Oh, if I'd but died sixty years ago—a little innocent, happy child!"

"But you didn't, you know," said the practical Tadge, "and it's no use groaning over what can't be helped. Better think of the present—of your daughter—"

"No! Not the woman that leaves me here to die in a ditch. No! I disinherit her! I'm rich; but she has no penny of my wealth."

"You've made a will, then?" she asked.

"What matters?" cried the old man, sharply; "is it your business to ask? Do you want it? That's why you slink and fawn round me, is it? You think I shall rob my own flesh and blood to fatten you—no, no! I love my money too well for that."

"Pity you can't take it with you, I'm sure," cried Tadge, with a contemptuous sneer. "Makes you so happy, too! Yeh, I don't want your money. Better give it to them you've robbed of it, and be quick about it!"

"You think I'm sinking?" he exclaimed, in an agony.

"Think! You know it as well as I do."

"But I shall live till little Violet comes! I must live till she comes. And, Tadge, before it's too late listen to me. You know Oliver?"

"Jerome's boy?"

"The same. Things fall out strangely in this world, and he is in a position I never thought to see him fill. But it mayn't last. He has enemies, and has long had them. I've been one of them, and the woman that leaves me here to perish, while she goes off after her own pleasures is another. Folks have said she was mother to the boy."

"But she is not?"

"No."

"And Jerome—he is his father—"

"One moment. My eyes swim and my brain grows dizzy. And what's this? Is my tongue falling me? Oh, how tired, how tired and weary I am growing. Is this death?"

"It cannot be," said Tadge. "Rest a moment, and then tell me what you know of Oliver, and what wrong you and Jacintha have done him. It will ease your conscience to tell this; it will lift at least one wrong from your soul."

He did not answer.

It seemed to Tadge that he was listening acutely for some distant sound, and this proved to be the case, for he presently whispered, as to himself:

"She comes! Violet is here!"

"Here?" cried Tadge, and incredulously turned towards the door.

As she went the handle turned and someone entered. There was the rustling of a silk dress and it was indeed Violet Maldon who advanced into the glare of the fire. She was greatly agitated and her face was of a marble whiteness.

As she looked towards the figure on the bed her slight frame quivered with agitation.

"Sir—Signor Gasparo—you have sent for me?" she faltered.

"Yes."

"And I have complied with your earnest request that I should come here—here, into your presence, which is more loathsome to me than language can express."

"I know it, I feel it; but you are here, and it is

well. Something that I cannot understand tells me that I am dying."

"Then heaven pity you!"

"It will at least look on me none the less kindly for what I now say. Mine has not been a good life—"

"Good!"

"Nay, not worse than some who live honoured and respected; but not good. I have done things from which better men would have shrunk, but I have been no hypocrite. No—no hypocrite."

"And this is your miserable consolation?"

"This and the thought that I may in part undo what I have done. The injuries I have heaped on your head weigh upon my memory, and I have sent for you that I might ask your forgiveness, and make such poor atonement as is yet in my power. Listen to me."

But Violet drew herself back.

"Enough," she said. "I know the worst; but I will remember that you are on the brink of another world, and I will not withhold from you what you ask. So far as it is in human nature to forgive great, life-long wrongs, I forgive you."

"Nay, first hear me—"

"Do I not know enough?"

"True; more than enough, but—not the worst."

"No?"

"Bear with me while I recall the past. Your father was my firm friend. We were boys together, and though our natures were as dissimilar as our languages—for we met at the college where he went to acquire Italian and I English—yet there sprang up a strong and cordial feeling between us. The best of my heart I gave to him, and as time rolled on we commenced our careers in life, side by side, and vowing eternal friendship. It was the old story—"

"You quarrelled?"

"Yes, and a woman was the cause of it. I loved her, and she won her. Had she become mine the whole current of my life might have been changed; but she did not. She spurned me from her feet, and he made her his wife. I vowed never to forgive him—and I never did."

"But you remained friends?"

"No; the whole current of our friendship was interrupted for years and years. It was only after half a lifetime that the breach was healed. And oh, what a change had come over us in the interval! Your father had grown a hard, stern man of business, and I had placed before myself only one object—that of amassing a colossal fortune, by shorter and less tedious roads than those he was content to walk in. To an extent I have succeeded, and this, this is the result!"

He groaned as he looked round the gloomy apartment, and struck one clenched fist upon his breast as if to express the desolation within as well as without.

"This is the result!" he repeated. "I am dying here alone, unloved, unpitied, with a hideous confession forced from my lips for my soul's sake." He paused and murmured again. "For my soul's sake! Well, well; let me proceed. Before chance threw us again in each other's way, I had married, my daughter had been born, and my wife—I married her for money only—had pined away and died. Your mother, the woman who should have been mine, was still in her prime, with you as a child about her knees. She welcomed me to her house and her table, made much of me as an old friend, and spoke of the past in a light, flippant tone, never suspecting how every word she uttered went to my heart. Never suspecting either that this past was as bright and vivid before my eyes as it had ever been, and that as I had not forgotten, so neither had I forgiven."

"You nursed the malice of years in your heart?"

"I did, and in those years it did not weaken or diminish, it only strengthened, until at last I shaped it towards one deadly purpose, and calmly and stealthily I carried it out to the end."

"Your friendship was renewed?"

"In seeming—yes. We became fast friends, he and I—business friends, and this served me well. I grew into his confidence. I was in the secret of his affairs. I discovered that he was possessed of an ample fortune—that is for a man in his position—and I learned that his intention was, in the event of his death, to bestow it all upon his child. A natural paternal intention, was it not? And I was quite content. I applauded his design, because his projects squared with my own."

"Do I understand—"

"Wait, it will become clear to you. Your father's fortune I designed for myself."

Violet started.

"It was your deliberate purpose to possess yourself of it?" she asked.

"Unquestionably, and at the same time I resolved to make that intention serve the ends of science to which I have been passionately attached. I had long studied the secret of artificial death, that is, of keeping

the body apparently dead for a lengthened period of time. This was known to the ancients, and formed the groundwork of many remarkable stories. Accident had thrown the secret in my way, and—you know I am an expert at it?"

No wonder Violet shuddered as she listened.

The recollection of what had happened to her in the old house, where she had lain for days like an inanimate corpse, came out with thrilling vividness.

Gasparo continued:

"Up to that time there had been a difficulty in trying experiments, as well as the absence of immediate temptation. Both opportunity and incentive were now offered. To secure the fortune I had designed for myself it was necessary to remove those in possession of it."

"To murder them, you mean?"

"You would call it so. Enough that I commenced my experiments. Your mother fell ill."

"Through your agency?"

"Yes, as the result of chemicals secretly administered. In her case the experiment I designed to try failed. I wanted skill. My method of procedure was bad, and—my patient died."

"You killed her—my mother!"

"She died," said Gasparo, instinctively prevaricating, even in this death-bed confession. "With my next patient I was more successful. Your father was taken ill."

"And again you were the cause of the malady?"

"True. He rapidly grew worse and worse. The doctors pretended to understand the disease; but were wholly ignorant of it, and their remedies only aggravated the evil. To me, his bosom friend, he confided his fears that all was over: he appointed me his executor, confided his child to my care, and—"

"Died?"

"No."

"What! He did not die?"

"Have I not said that my experiments were devoted to producing the semblance of death?"

"And in his case you were successful?"

"Perfectly."

Violet reflected a moment and the expression of her face changed to one of absolute horror.

"My father did not die, and yet—great heavens—you do not mean me to understand that it was your design that my mother should be buried alive?"

"For that matter she would never have awakened."

"And that my father did go to his grave—"

"Living!"

With a loud shriek Violet clasped her brow and sank helpless to the ground. Almost as horrified as her companion at what she had heard, Tadge darted forward and attempted to raise and console her.

But the shock had been too great; and for a time she was powerless. Then the sense of the atrocity which had been just detailed fired her with sudden energy.

With a fiery blaze in her eyes, and a terrible rigidity in every limb, she sprang to her feet, and surveyed the miserable object lying on the bed before her.

"Wretched man!" she exclaimed, "why have you told me this? Is it to gratify your demoniacal passions that, even in death, you seek to overshadow all my coming life with the cloud of these horrible massacres? While I was ignorant of them I was happy. Is it not enough that you have betrayed your trust, robbed me of fortune, hunted me almost to distraction; but you must do me this wrong also? What is your object?"

As she spoke the dying man half raised himself by a spasmodic effort; then one word formed itself on his blue lips.

"Forgiveness!" he said.

In the act of speaking it he fell heavily back and moved no more.

The monster had uttered his last word.

(To be continued.)

THE TALE OF A DOG.—*Le Petit Journal* of Paris, which contains from time to time some very strange stories indeed, has the following anecdote of a dog:—Late a traveller passed in a carriage along the Avenue de Neuilly; the night was dark. All at once the horse stopped, and the traveller saw that the animal had an obstacle. At the same moment a man raised himself from before the horse, uttering a cry. "Why don't you take care?" said the traveller. "Ah," cried the man, "you would do better, instead of hallooing, to lend me your lantern." "What for?" "I had three hundred francs in gold on my person; my pocket has broken, and all is fallen in the street. It is a commission with which my master has entrusted me. If I do not find the money I am a ruined man." "It is not easy to find the pieces on such a night; have you none left?" "Yes, I have one." "Give it to me." The man hesitated. "Give it to me, it is as a means of recovering the others." The

poor man gave him his last coin. The traveller whistled; a magnificent Danish dog began to leap around him. "Here," said the traveller, putting the coin to the nose of the dog—"look." The intelligent creature sniffed a moment at the money, and then began to run about the road. Every minute he returned leaping, and deposited in the hand of his master a napoleon. In about twenty minutes the whole sum was recovered. The poor fellow who had got his money back turned full of thanks towards the traveller, who had now got into his carriage. "Ah, you are my preserver," said he, "tell me at least your name." "I have done nothing," said the traveller. "Your preserver is my dog; his name is Rabet-Joe." And then, whipping his horse, he disappeared in the darkness.

KENMORE.

CHAPTER XVII.

On the morning after the departure of Douglas and Aldred, Atholbane felt sad and lonesome. Even Thorwald had gone, so he had none to converse with, save the servants, for he was not in a mood to seek his wife.

Of late she had seemed more distant from him than ever—and more than once she had intimated her wish that she might never see him again. It was in these moods, when left alone by the departure of visitors, that he had been wont to seek and enjoy the companionship of Edwin, but Edwin was with him no more.

Towards the middle of the forenoon, as the earl was thinking of sending for his horse, a gay cavalcade came rushing over the drawbridge, at the head of which rode the king.

"By my faith, sire," cried the earl, as he grasped Edgar's hand after the latter had dismounted, "your coming is most opportune—I am lonesome and sad."

"Where is Douglas?" asked Edgar.

"Gone to Lanark."

"So soon; I thought he meant to tarry longer."

"An unexpected message called him, sire; he will return."

"And Aldred—where is he?"

"Gone with Douglas. Old Walthorpe, the forester, is nigh unto death, and would see his son."

"And who sent for Douglas?" asked the king.

"The same Walthorpe wished to see them both before he died."

"What was the nature of the message?"

"I know no more, sire."

"And you suspect nothing?"

"What could I suspect?"

Instead of making any rejoinder, the king bowed his head for a few moments, and when he looked up again a strange light was just fading from his eye.

"I cannot stop with you more, good brother," he said. "I am on my way to Stirling, and I came hither to see if Aldred would not ride with me. I will rest awhile, however."

Atholbane led the way to the keep, where the countess and Clara Douglas joined them, and, after partaking of refreshments and chatting awhile with the ladies, his majesty arose to depart.

"You will stop on your return?" urged the host.

"Yes," replied Edgar. "Such was my plan."

"Your apartments will be ready for you."

"If Aldred have not returned when I come back," said the king, as they passed through the hall, "I shall have a favour to ask of you."

"Anything, sire."

"It is not much. I wish to occupy the apartments in the Ghost's Tower."

The countess, who had been standing by the open door, heard this much, and she heard her husband make favourable reply, but she could hear no more. She saw the king and his retinue ride away, and then she returned to her own chamber, leaving Clara to entertain the earl.

And a pleasant entertainment the earl found it.

Under the influence of the maiden's genial smile and consoling words, he found his spirits revive, and by-and-by they walked away together, down by the shores of the lake.

Meanwhile a new thought had entered the mind of the countess. She was determined to pay a visit to the Ghost's Tower. Nothing on earth could have induced her to spend a night in that ghostly place, but on this bright, beautiful day, with the sun shining so warmly, there could be no danger. Aldred slept there and had no trouble, and now the king sought the privilege of occupying those rooms. What did it mean? There must be some reason for it. Edgar could not have expressed such a wish without some object.

She knew that Aldred professed to have seen bright spirits there, and she knew that the king had stopped there one night with him. She had learned

the fact from one of her servants who was cognizant of it.

In short, her curiosity was aroused to such a pitch that she could not resist the temptation; and while the fit was on she called her maid to accompany her, meaning to make the visit while her husband and Clara were away.

"I have a curiosity to see the blue chamber once more," she said to her attendant, "and we will go at once. I hope you are not afraid, Rebecca."

"Not at all, ma'am," returned the maid, who was a bright-faced girl of some twenty years. "If you wish to go I am ready to go with you."

"There can be no danger, Rebecca, for Aldred of Lanark has slept there many nights."

The countess seemed to ask the question rather than make the assertion. Rebecca might have felt some hesitation had she been asked to go alone to the Ghost's Tower, but she had no fear of going with her mistress.

She knew that Aldred was away, and she felt a mighty curiosity to look into the chambers where the ghosts were said to make their nocturnal visits.

"What danger can there be in the day-time, ma'am?" she demanded, with pert assurance. "Ghosts are like the stars—they can travel only in the night. Whoever heard of a ghost being seen by daylight?"

"To be sure, Rebecca—who ever did? Let us go at once."

The countess led the way, and with a bold step she moved on until she reached the corridor beyond the main keep, but here she faltered, and finally came to a stop.

"What is the matter, my lady?"

"Nothing, Rebecca."

Margaret tried to speak bravely, but her voice was low, and when she moved again her step was slower than before, and she kept closer to her maid.

At the door which opened to the first ante-chamber of the tower the countess stopped once more, and her hand trembled upon the handle.

"Surely, ma'am," suggested the maid, who could not fail to understand her mistress's feelings, "you and I can have nothing to fear."

The words called new uneasiness to the soul of the Lady Margaret. She thought of the plot she had heard entered into against Aldred of Lanark, and she thought of how she was aiding her dark-browed son against her husband. But she could not expose these things to her attendant, and with a powerful effort she calmed her outward emotion, and pushed open the door. When she reached the large bed-chamber she stopped and sat down.

How familiar everything looked. The hangings were the same, the furniture the same, the trappings of the bed the same, and the ornaments the same that had been her silent companions in the years that were gone.

"This used to be your sleeping-apartment?" said Rebecca, interrogatively.

"Yes," replied the countess.

"And that is the blue chamber beyond?"

"Yes."

"Shall we look into it?"

Margaret rose and moved towards the door. Her hand was upon the handle, and she hesitated. At that moment a passing cloud obscured the sun, and a deep shadow fell upon the scene.

"Shall I open the door, my lady? It would be a pity not to look into the blue chamber after all this trouble."

The cloud seemed to grow thicker and darker over the face of the sun, and as the countess, with a violent effort, tremblingly opened the door, a shadow, as of approaching night, had fallen upon the quaint old tapestry. But she did not stop. She pushed the door wide open and crossed the threshold. One more step, and she was for the moment rooted to the spot whereon she stood by a scene that sent a thrill of horror to every nerve.

At the altar, before a crucifix, knelt a female figure, clad in black, with hands folded across the bosom and head bowed. A low moan from the lips of the dark presence trembled upon the air, and then, with a wild, piercing shriek, the countess staggered back and was caught in the arms of her attendant, and at the same moment the door of the blue chamber closed, seemingly of its own accord.

"What was it, my lady?" asked Rebecca, in quivering, frightened tones.

The countess started up and looked around.

"Where am I?"

"Here you are, dear lady, in the bed-chamber."

What did you see in the other room?"

Margaret looked around again with a wild, uncertain gaze, and finally she seemed to comprehend what transpired, and she also observed that the door of the blue chamber was closed.

"I went in there," she said, raising her trembling hand towards the door.

"Yes, lady."

"And did you not see what I saw?"

"I saw nothing, lady. I did not enter the room. I was waiting for you to pass on when you cried out with a terrible cry and fell back into my arms."

"On my son's life, let me get away from here as soon as possible. I can not tell you now what I saw. I am weak, Rebecca. Is there not wine upon the sideboard?"

"Yes, lady."

"Bring me some—anything to take this palsied quivering from my limb."

"Here is wine and cordial both," said Rebecca, after she had examined the bottles. She was somewhat nervous and uneasy, but the extreme helplessness of her mistress gave strength.

"Bring me the cordial."

The maid poured some of the cordial into the silver cup, and Lady Margaret drank it at a draught.

"Will you have more?"

"No, Rebecca, that's enough. It warms me and gives me strength. Let us go now."

"And will you not tell me as you go what you saw?" asked the attendant.

When they reached the corridor the countess answered:

"I saw the dark spirit that haunts that chamber. It was a woman clad in black. Did you hear her groan?"

"No, lady, I heard nothing of the kind. Could it have been something of your own imagination?"

"Hush, Rebecca. I know what I saw. Let us hasten on. I would reach my chamber before the earl returns."

Once more in her own apartment the countess sank down faint and shattered, and in a little while she complained of pain and dizziness.

"Rebecca," she moaned, "I feel sick almost unto death."

"I had better send for the doctor, lady?"

"No, no—not yet. I may feel better by-and-by."

But instead of feeling better Lady Margaret felt worse and worse, and at length, with the terrible conviction upon her that she might die if she did not obtain help, she suffered her maid to go for the physician.

Malbert chanced to be near at hand and attended upon the countess without delay.

"Good Malbert, do you think I shall die?"

The old man shook his head with a pained and puzzled look.

"I cannot conceive," he said, "what manner of disease is upon you."

"It is pain, pain, pain," groaned the sufferer. "I am burning here," and she pressed her hand over her stomach. "And I am dying, and my head aches."

"You must have eaten something, lady, or drunk something."

"The cordial," cried Rebecca, whose thoughts flashed back to the scene in the old tower.

"No, no, no," uttered Margaret, "there was no cordial; I have not had any."

"But, my lady—"

"Hush, Rebecca, you know not what you say."

The physician saw there was something shadowed in the maid's remark which the mistress would conceal, and finally, after he had made the countess understand that her life might depend upon his knowing the truth, he gained the story.

His first movement after this was based upon the supposition that his patient had taken poison, and when he had administered a powerful emetic and given Rebecca directions for watching until his return, he went to the bed-chamber in the Ghost's Tower and brought away both the bottles that had stood unsealed upon the sideboard.

As he passed the head of the stairs on his return, he saw the Earl and Clara Douglas in the lower hall, and having sent the maiden to see the countess, he drew Atholbane aside and told him what had transpired.

The countess with her maid had been to the haunted chambers of the old tower, and there she had seen something which had sorely frightened her, and to help her to overcome her weakness she had drunk some cordial from a bottle that stood upon the sideboard.

"There were two bottles," the physician continued.

"And I have them both here."

"They are some that I gave to Aldred," said the earl.

"And you have more of the same kind?"

"Yes."

"Then send for some, and let us compare them."

Atholbane found his butler, and directed him to bring a bottle of wine and a bottle of cordial like those which he held.

Meanwhile, clean cups were procured, and when the butler retired the physician was ready for his examination.

And it did not take long to demonstrate that the wine and the cordial which had been brought from the tower were very different from the pure specimens which had been brought from the cellar.

The first mentioned had a paler hue, as though the organic matter which gave colour to the liquid had been eaten up by some powerful agent, and they also gave forth an odour, when violently shaken, that was particularly disagreeable.

"Malbert, what is it?" asked the earl, in a hushed voice.

"We must ascertain that, my lord, by experiment," replied the physician.

"And the sooner we do it the better, for I may then know how to treat the countess. There are some of your kids in the court. Let us bring one in."

Unwilling to trust any of the servants with the secret, the earl went himself to the court, and soon returned, bearing a kid in his arms, and without much difficulty he and Malbert succeeded in forcing a goodly quantity of the cordial down the animal's throat.

They had not long to wait for the result.

Ere many minutes the poor creature staggered and fell, a violent paroxysm ensued, there was frothing at the mouth, a starting out of the eyes, and in a little while the kid was dead.

"There can be no question about this," said Atholbane.

"None, my lord. The countess is poisoned!"

"Then," cried the earl, starting to his feet, "let us hasten to her assistance, and after that we will learn more if we can. We may save her yet."

They found Lady Margaret suffering intensely. The emetic had operated, but it had not relieved her of pain. She saw her husband, and knew him.

"Oh, my lord, is there no help?" she groaned.

"Dear Margaret," replied Atholbane, advancing to the bed, and taking her hand, "you are very sick."

"I want the truth," she said, clutching at the hand of her husband, spasmodically. "Have I been poisoned?"

"You have, my lady. Malbert has told me of your adventure, and we have discovered that the cordial which you drank contained a poison most deadly."

The countess uttered a loud cry, and started up from her pillow.

"Curses on the low-born wretch!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, this is some of Aldred's work!"

"No, no, no!" cried Clara, impulsively. "He could not have done such a thing."

"He did! he did!" shrieked the countess. "He left the poisoned cordial there in order that we might drink it and die."

"Say, rather," returned Clara, flushed with excitement, "that some enemy left it there in order that Aldred might drink and die!"

"Peace!" interposed the earl, speaking partly to his wife and in part to Clara. "Whoever left it there has accomplished his work most terribly, but I think he has missed his aim. The serpent has bitten where he least expected."

"But I am not bitten. I shall not die. Save me! Oh, save me! I burn! I burn! I burn! Malbert, where are your potent drugs? Oh!"

The suffering woman writhed and twisted, and directly she began to foam at the mouth.

"Where is Thorwald?" she cried, again starting from her pillow, and gazing wildly around. "Thorwald. My son!—Away, Earl of Kenmore. I care not for you. I love you not. I love my son—my Thorwald—the son of brave Eric. Oh! Thorwald, thou shalt be Earl of Kenmore by-and-by."

Thus gasping, the woman sank back, and when she tried to speak again she could not. Her husband bent over her, but she tried to put him away, and her lips moved as though she would call her son. Even Clara Douglas she noticed not.

It was painful to see the sufferer writhe in her agony, and Atholbane asked if nothing could be done. The old physician shook his head.

"There is no help on earth," he said. "The end is near at hand."

In a little while Clara Douglas moved from the bedside, and grasped the earl by the arm.

"My lord," she said, in an eager, quivering whisper, "do you believe that Aldred of Lanark did that?"

Atholbane kissed the maiden upon the brow, and gently replied:

"Fear not, sweet child. The sin lies not at Aldred's door."

Then he turned and stood by the side of the dead countess, and he prayed from the innermost depths of his heart that she might find forgiveness in the other world.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the day following, the death of the countess, towards the middle of the afternoon, word was brought

to the earl by Finlan that Thorwald was approaching the castle.

"I would see him at once, good warden, before he can learn from other lips what has happened during his absence. Conduct him hither as soon as he dismounts."

Atholbane had been busy during the forenoon, and he had learned much that gave confirmation to suspicions he had entertained touching the poisoning of the cordial in the Ghost's Tower.

He had not only discovered that Thorwald had kept watch there once with his esquire, but on the day of the chase, when the knight had returned from Finglen, old Finlan had seen him passing through the western corridor, while his esquire held his horse in the court.

The earl easily remembered what had followed. Thorwald had joined the hunting party, and at the conclusion of the sport had ridden away again towards Finglen—had ridden away without knowing that a messenger had arrived from Lanark, and thus he was in ignorance of the departure of Douglas and Aldred.

The coming of that messenger had perhaps saved Aldred's life, and caused the poisonous fang to strike the life of another. Atholbane had no desire to accuse the Son of Eric at present, but he was anxious to satisfy himself, and he believed he could do it if he could have the privilege of breaking to the false knight the news of his mother's death.

Thorwald entered the earl's apartment with an expression of anxiety upon his dark features, but it was an anxiety to gain intelligence rather than from any intelligence already received.

"The warden informs me that you wish to speak with me, my lord."

"Yes, Thorwald."

The earl spoke calmly, and at the same time motioned the knight to a seat.

"As I have no one else at hand to consult, I was forced to ask your presence. Have you heard anything of Aldred?"

"How?—of Aldred?" repeated Thorwald, with sudden interest, and unable to keep back a show of slight trepidation. "What of him? Is he not at the castle?"

Atholbane had gained one point. Thorwald did not know of Aldred's absence.

"Ah," said the master of Kenmore, with a sad shake of the head, "I have melancholy news to break to you."

"Ha! has anything befallen the adventurer of Lanark?" cried Thorwald, while a bright, fierce sparkle illumined his eye.

"I fear the spirits that claim the old tower for their abode have become malevolent," pursued the earl, slowly and solemnly.

"But Aldred—what of him?" demanded the knight, impatiently.

"I have not been easy," continued Atholbane, seeming not to notice the eagerness of his stepson.

"I have dreaded the evil influence of those gloomy chambers—I have dreaded for a long time—and now the stroke has fallen! Tell me no more that there are no evil spirits within the walls of Kenmore! Death has followed in their footsteps!"

"Ha! and has Aldred fallen at last?" uttered Thorwald. "I thought it would be so. I warned him, but he would not listen. I told him he was running into danger most recklessly. How did he die, my lord? How was he found?"

"Of whom do you speak?"

"Of Aldred of Lanark."

"You misunderstand me, Thorwald; Aldred of Lanark has gone away with Douglas. And furthermore, the evil spirits of which I speak were not the ghosts that had frightened so many mortals. Poison was left in Aldred's bed-chamber—poisoned cordial—and one of our household, who had taken a strange fancy to pay a visit to the old tower during Aldred's absence, drank of the cordial and died."

"Died? who—who, my lord?"

"Thorwald, it was your mother!"

The wretch clutched his hands and gasped for breath, and sank back as though stricken with mortal terror. He was pale as death, and for a moment his eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

"My mother!"

"Your mother, Thorwald."

By a powerful effort the base man shook off the outer terror, and remembering that he had a part to play, he assumed a semblance of grief and indignation; but his grief was expressed in a very few words—words badly chosen and lamely spoken.

"But, ye gods!" he exclaimed, "what shall we say of the base wretch who could thus plant grim death in our very midst? My lord, that poison was meant for either you or me—perhaps for both of us. Aldred of Lanark hoped that one or both of us might go to his apartment during his absence. He is a murderer!"

Not a movement of a feature betrayed the direction of the earl's thoughts or suspicions. He simply said, as he arose from his seat:

"I hope that Aldred will come out clear, but if he is guilty he must suffer. Your mother's remains are in the chapel; you can see them if you wish."

Thorwald turned away, but he did not go to the chapel.

He had no desire to gaze upon the face of his dead mother then.

He went to his own chamber, where he sat down and reflected upon the unfortunate result of his evil plot.

If he could fasten the deed upon Aldred it might yet work to his advantage, though he bitterly regretted that he had lost his mother.

He had loved her as well as he could love anything, and, moreover, in her death he had lost his best friend—the one friend upon whose exertions and influence he mainly depended for the attainment of his ambitious object.

When Thorwald appeared in the household he wore a face of deep mourning, and though he could not plainly see that Clara Douglas avoided him, he fancied that the earl was more disposed to be friendly than usual.

Early in the evening of that day—the day following Margaret's death—the king arrived, on his return from Stirling.

He was deeply shocked when he was informed of the tragic death of the countess, and as soon as he had opportunity, he drew apart with Atholbane, and listened to a recital of the particulars.

"It is all very plain to me," he said, after he had heard the story. "The poisoned shaft was aimed at Aldred, and we may piously conclude that the finger of God worked his salvation!"

"Oh, my soul," cried the earl, "what mysteries are locked up in that old tower! Heaven alone knows what pain and unrest I suffer."

The king arose from his seat and placed his hand upon the shoulder of his host. There was a deep, quivering flush upon his face, and his voice was low and tremulous.

"Atholbane, to-night I shall watch in the blue chamber. If I gain nothing by that, I shall sleep my sleep in the hours of to-morrow, and watch again on the succeeding night. Ask me not what I mean—ask me not what I hope—ask me nothing until I choose to speak."

"As you will, sire," returned the earl. "I am as a little child in my present trouble. To you I can speak as I would speak to no other living creature. I mourn for Margaret because she was my wife, and yet I cannot banish from me the feeling that she was plotting against me while she lived. She and her son were a foreign element in the household, and, heaven forgive me if I am wrong, had the poisoned fang pierced the life for which it was intended she would not have been sorry. And yet I have only myself to blame; I sinned when I married with her. It is no excuse for me that she persistently sought my hand, or that her noble brother urged me to the step. My heart was not there; and when I stood at the altar, and the words of union fell from the lips of the bishop, they sounded to me like a knell. Even then I had a foreshadowing of the mystic agony I was to suffer. Edgar, in the first hour of my marriage with the widow of Eric the spirit of my sweet and sainted Maud seemed crying to me for a place in my heart, and from that hour to the present I cannot say that I have known an emotion of pure, unalloyed joy. But when the spirit came in more tangible shape—when to material eyes appeared the form and face of my beloved—who can tell the amount of anxiety that weighed me down?"

As the earl ceased speaking, he covered his face with his hands, and the king bent over and spoke words of consolation.

"And now," concluded Edgar, "we will let the matter rest for the present. Let us go forth and sniff the evening air."

At an early hour the king retired for the night to the apartments in the Ghost's Tower. He would have no one with him, not even Atholbane.

The door opening from the corridor into the outer ante-room he locked behind him, for he did not choose that any curious servant should follow him, and then he went on to the blue chamber, where, having set his lamp upon a table near the centre of the apartment, he sat down and opened a quaint old volume of Saxon legends which he had brought with him, and there he sat and read till midnight; and to the traveller, who might have been wandering upon the shore of the lake at that late hour, the windows of the high chamber, illumined by the glare of the watcher's lamp, might have looked like the fiery eyes of a giant spectre.

In the morning the king came down, and announced his intention of returning at once to his capital.

When Atholbane asked him what he had seen he placed his finger upon his lips and shook his head.

"Ask me no questions, my brother, for I can answer none. If in the time to come I should feel justified in speaking, I shall do so."

After Edgar's horse had been brought into the court, and while he stood with the rein in his hand, the earl again betrayed his anxiety touching the events of the past night.

"Pardon me," pleaded the king. "I would enlighten you if I dared. Wait a little while; I shall come again by-and-by, and then you may ask me what you will. In the meantime, keep an eye upon Thorwald!"

The funeral of Margaret, Countess of Kenmore, took place, and on the day following Thorwald left the castle, having first informed the earl that he was going to Pinglen, where he might be found if he should be wanted. He evidently felt ill at ease at Kenmore just then.

In the first place, he heard too much wonderment among the servants touching the strange death of his mother, to please him, for he had conscience enough to give him trouble beneath his burden of guilt. In the second place, Clara Douglas persistently avoided him, and he dare not give her more occasion to dislike him by pressing his attention upon her while he had no one to back him.

And, furthermore, he thought he could discover signs of dislike and distrust on the part of the older servants, and more than once he had found the earl regarding him with an expression not the most promising.

He had made up his mind that he would go away until Douglas returned, and then, by proper management, he might come back and do the work which he and his mother had laid out.

A week passed away after the funeral, and not a word from Douglas or Aldred. Clara enjoyed herself very well with Atholbane, but still she was anxious—anxious to know what detained her father, and anxious on account of Aldred.

"Be patient," said the earl. "We shall hear from them before long."

"Ah, my lord, but you are anxious, too."

"A little, I grant; but my anxiety is not all on account of those two. I should have heard from the king ere this."

"Be patient," retorted Clara, with a smile. "You may hear from him before long."

And then they walked down by the lake, where they strayed upon the pebbly shore until the shadows of evening began to fall.

On the very next day a courier arrived from Lanark with the intelligence that all was well; and he brought a packet from Earl Douglas, enclosing a missive for Atholbane and one for Clara.

"The king is here with me," wrote Douglas, "and says that I must go to Dumfries with him. He is full of mystery which he will not speak. He brings me intelligence of the death of my sister. Heaven rest her soul!"

Farther on he wrote:

"You will forget that I ever thought of bestowing the hand of my child upon Thorwald. I will explain all when I see you. Clara will remain with you until I come."

From this time Clara Douglas took hope. Her father had written nothing in favour of Aldred, only to say that he was well; but he had written of Thorwald in a manner that gave her courage; and, furthermore, it had been plainly expressed that the brave young knight was a favourite of the king.

This was ground enough, and she stood upon it hopefully and gladly. The heavens grew brighter above her, and the future grew radiant with promise.

At the end of three weeks from the time of his departure Thorwald returned to the castle; but he did not remain. He stopped only one night, and then went to Seane.

Two weeks after that Earl Douglas and Aldred arrived at Kenmore, and Clara rested once more upon the bosom of her father.

"I may see Aldred?" she said, pleadingly, after waiting a long time in vain for her father to pronounce his name.

The earl took both his daughter's hands in his own, and looked earnestly into her face.

"My child," he replied, "I will be frank with you. I know full well that you love the gallant knight, but I do not know that you can give him your hand. I would not raise a hope in your bosom that might be blasted. You had better, for your own peace, look upon him as beyond your reach. Hush, Clara! You cannot persuade me. Aldred is not what we have thought him, but what he is I know not. For the present it must be as I have said. You may see him—you may speak with him—but my purpose is not altered."

So bright had been her hope, so powerful and enduring her ardent love, that even now the maiden did not despair. The king and Atholbane were Aldred's

friends, and from the reserve of her father she felt that she might turn to them. And then her father had not spoken severely of the knight; he had rather shown a liking for him, and a desire that fortune might smile upon him.

Not long afterwards, while Earl Douglas had gone to speak alone with Atholbane, Clara and Aldred met in the hall.

A trembling, fluttering greeting passed between them, and as the hand of the maiden still remained within her father's grasp she asked, by her earnest, beseeching gaze, what she dared not ask in words. Aldred understood her, and he answered her silent question:

"Clara, I know your thoughts, but I cannot give you light. You have spoken with your father?"

"Yes; and he can tell me nothing. Oh, why this suspense? What is its meaning, Aldred?"

"In truth, dear lady," replied the youth, "I am beside myself with doubt and anxiety. Whether the future holds for me in store joy and peace, or woe and wretchedness, I know not. Your father knows no more than I do. The king alone seems to hold the secret in his keeping, and he will not speak. But he will speak soon. He promised us that he would be here as soon as we should arrive. He may come this evening. Ha! here comes a courier now. It is Edgar's page. His majesty cannot be far behind. Remain you here, and I will go and speak with him."

In the meantime the two earls had retired to a private closet, where Douglas told to Atholbane the result of his interview with his forester.

"When Aldred and myself reached Lanark," he said, "we found old Walthorp really at the point of death, though he still retained his senses, and was able to converse. He asked us to sit down by his bedside, and then he told us that he had deceived us both, though not willingly. Aldred was not his child, as he had always represented; and he had felt anxious to reveal the truth because there had for a long time been an impression upon his mind that it might somehow result to the youth's advantage. And this was the story he told:

"About five-and-twenty years ago, while Malcolm Canmore was in Northumberland—and while you and I were there, too—fighting the Normans and the Saxons, a young woman, pale, weary, and weak, arrived one evening at the door of his lodge, and begged for shelter. She bore an infant in her arms—an infant only a few weeks old. Pale as she was, and wan, Walthorp thought he had never seen a woman so beautiful, and both he and his good wife cared for her most tenderly.

"One of the first requests she made, after she had rested awhile, was that no one, save themselves, should know that they had a stranger beneath their roof.

"In a few days she had so far regained her strength that she expressed a determination to continue on her journey, but she would not take her child with her. She wished Walthorp and his wife to adopt it, and rear it as their own, and if possible, to make even their lord, on his return, think that they were their parents.

"They asked her name, but she would only tell them that she was the true and lawful wife of a brave soldier who had fallen beneath a Norman lance while fighting under the banner of Malcolm Canmore.

"She begged them to rear the child in the way of truth and honour; to educate him to the best of their ability, and to be sure that evil was kept from his path.

"She seemed beside herself with sorrow and suffering; but the good forester could not control her, and finally he promised that he would keep the child as his own—that he would present it to the world as his own; and then he suffered the woman to depart.

"Walthorp never saw the woman again, nor did he ever hear from her.

"He reared the child as he had given his word, and I had never been led to suspect that he and his wife were not its own parents.

"In time I came to like the bright and blithesome lad, and as I had no son I took this boy—for a boy it was—to my home and to my heart.

"But you know all this. Walthorp had hardly finished his narrative when his speech failed him, and shortly afterwards he died. That is the story, my brother."

"And Aldred is the child of whom you have spoken?" said Atholbane, strangely excited.

"He is."

"And have you gained nothing more? Do you not know—have you not some clue?"

"Not a thread."

"But, Douglas, there must be some means of ascertaining who his parents were. A soldier who fought under Malcolm—who fought with us! Oh, who shall open this mystery to our understanding?"

"My only hope is in the king. He has intimated that he can furnish the clue."

"The king!—By St. Michael! here he comes!"

(To be continued.)

VALUE OF LAND AT MELBOURNE.—Seven hundred and forty pounds a foot is not a bad price for land, yet that was about the sum paid by Messrs. Buckley & Nunn for a small portion of Bourk Street, on which a part of their business premises is erected. For 27 ft. frontage they paid no less a sum than £20,000. The land is about 200 ft. deep, and in 1839 was purchased from the government at the original land sale in Sydney for about £10.

FACETIÆ.

JUST SO.—"Jeff, why am you like de gum-tree?" "I giv it up, Sam; I can't tell you." "Cass you stays green both summer and winter."

A LACONIC HISTORIAN.—In a history of plants the author notices the virtue of hemp thus: "By this cordage ships are guided, bells are rung, and rogues are kept in awe."

AN EPICURE.—A gentleman fond of good living refused to start his colt for the "two-year-old stakes," on the ground that if he won them they wouldn't be worth the eating.

A QUIET HINT.—"Recollect, sir," said a tavern-keeper to a gentleman who was about leaving his house without paying his bill, "recollect, sir, if you should lose your purse, you didn't put it out here."

A SIGNIFICANT DREAM.—It would do no harm if every crowned head had a dream like that of the German prince who saw in a vision three rats, one fat, the other lean, and the third blind—sent for a celebrated Bohemian gipsy and demanded an explanation. "The fat rat," said the sorceress, "is your prime minister, the lean rat your people, and the blind rat yourself."

GENEALOGICAL QUARREL.—A dispute once arose between two Scotchmen, named Campbell and McLean upon the antiquity of their families. The latter would not allow that the Campbells had any right to rank with the McLeans in antiquity, who, he insisted, were in existence as a clan since the beginning of the world. Campbell had a little more biblical knowledge than his antagonist, and asked him if the clans of the McLeans were before the Flood. "Flood! what flood?" asked McLean. "The Flood, you know, that drowned all the world but Noah, and his family, and his flock," said Campbell. "Pooh! you and your Flood," said McLean; "my clan was afore the Flood." "I have not read in my Bible," said Campbell, "of the name of McLean going into Noah's ark." "Noah's ark!" retorted McLean in contempt, "whoever heard of a McLean that hadn't a boat of his ain?"

THE EARLY BIRD.

It's well to praise the early bird
For picking worms, but it's absurd
To think that bird, you cannot doubt it,
Would rise could worms be got without it.
—*Fun Almanack*, 1867.

A TRAIN-BELL.—A little while since the only danger to be apprehended from trains was that they might run over you on a railroad. Now-a-days, however, thanks to the style of dress adopted by the fair sex, the danger is that you may run over a train in the street.—*Fun Almanack*, 1867.

GRAPNEL-ING THE DIFFICULTY.

Miss Tippi. "Nothing is impossible, my dear child; it was thought impossible to raise a slender coil of rope from the depths of the Atlantic, but you see it has been done!"

Master Arthur. "Yes. But they only got it by a fluke!"—*Fun Almanack*, 1867.

SAGE REMARK.—"Well may they call it coolie labour," said Mr. Dodder, as he watched the blacks unloading the steamer at ——. "Well may they call it coolie labour, for it makes me quite hot to look at 'em!"—*Fun*.

OBLIGING, VEEY.

Fond Parent. "Ugh, ye aggywatin' child! I'll call the big ugly man to you, and—"

Nautical Party. "Shall I chuck 'im into the water for ye, mum?"—*Fun*.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND. AMONGST POACHERS.—A singular affair occurred at Wheatcroft, near Crich. For a few days the poachers had observed a fine covey of birds in the neighbourhood, and one night two poachers set off with their nets in order to take the game. It appeared that two other poachers had noticed the settlement of the feathered tribe, and they repaired to the scene of action on the same evening. Having hidden themselves for some time in the hedge bottom, the first-named, thinking all was clear, began fixing their nets. Soon afterwards the other poachers arrived, and were looking on as keepers by the first two. A general fight took place, which lasted long, sticks and stones being used freely. After two had got their heads split open, and a third his

arm broken, the men ran off in different directions. The mistake was found out next morning, when it transpired that the first two who made their appearance upon the "field of battle" were the uncles of the last two men—none of the parties being gamekeepers.

MEDICAL.—A sculptor friend, who has strabismus, consoles himself with the thought that he can always keep his profession in view through having a cast in his eye.—*Punch*.

TALLY, HO!—As congresses are now all the fashion, the cowkeepers propose to hold one at an early date in the Pump Room, Bath. It will be known in our social history as the Milk Diet.—*Punch*.

FLUNKIANA.

Master. "Thompson, I believe that I have repeatedly expressed an objection to being served with stale bread at dinner. How is it my wishes have not been attended to?"

Thompson. "Well, sir, I really don't know what is to be done! It won't do to waste it, and we can't eat it downstairs!"—*Punch*.

KING JOHN OF SAXONY.—The King of Saxony having been forced to knock under to Prussia, is recommended to accept the inevitable, or in other words, "to cut his coat according to his cloth." Considering the beating he has had, one may say that the cloth in this case is decidedly "Saxony double-milled."—*Punch*.

NOTIONS IN STREET NOMENCLATURE.

An Act of Parliament, just issued, authorizes the London, Chatham and Dover Railway to make two new streets, and alter a third, in connection with the Ludgate Station, and for the enlargement of the station to take part of the property of Apothecaries' Hall. How are the apothecaries to be paid by the London, Chatham and Dover Company? Is that company empowered to take the apothecaries' land without paying for it, or to pay for it in debentures, which would come to the same thing?

The names of the new streets about to be made by the insolvent concern above-named do not appear to have been settled. There is in the ancient, holy, and venerable city of Winchester a street named Cheese-hill Street, pronounced Chisel Street. With this spelling it might be adopted for one of them. The other two might be named respectively Doo Street and Diddle Street.—*Punch*.

STATISTICS.

MANUFACTURE OF CONFECTIONERY.—Switzerland has long enjoyed the honour of supplying Europe with confectioners. Even now, and especially in the departments of France, many confectionery establishments, which are thoroughly national, claim a Helvetic origin, and yet the confection manufacture of Marseilles exports sweetmeats to Egypt, Turkey, and the French West Indies. Its progress has been constant and rapid; towards the close of the First Empire were at Marseilles only four of these establishments, turning out annually confectionery to the value of 37,000*l*. In 1830 that city reckoned thirty-six manufactories of sirops, bonbons, and jam, the produce of which was estimated at nearly 500,000*l*. In 1840 the number of confectioners was thirty-nine, in 1856 sixty-eight, and in the present year it is 116. This branch of industry has assumed such an importance that its products are valued at 3,500,000*l*.—namely, pastry of various kinds, 900,000*l*; bonbons and other confectionery, 2,600,000*l*. It employs a great number of hands, and the following are the formidable figures representing the exports from Marseilles to foreign countries in the years named: 1826, 49,462 kilog.; 1830, 73,024; 1840, 146,598; 1855, 260,712; and in 1856, 461,220 kilog. During the last two centuries no personage of distinction passed through Marseilles without receiving the municipal gift, an invariable part of which was, according to the rank of the person, a certain number of boxes of confectionery. When, in 1777, the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII., visited Marseilles, the following, according to the *Cérémonial de l'Hôtel de Ville*, was the composition of the presents offered to him: twenty-four boxes of confitures glacées, cedrat, bergamote, orange, chinoïis, and others, weighing 118 lb. net, at 24 sous, equal to 141*l*. 12 sous, twenty-four boxes of fine comfits and pastilles, 95 lb. at 50 sous, 287*l*. 10 sous; for the forty-eight gilt boxes at 15 sous, 36*l*.; the total being 415*l*. 2 sous.

INFLUENCE OF SEASON ON CONDITION OF WOOD.—Experience has shown that the time when trees are felled has much influence on the condition of the wood. A trial was made with four pieces of oak cut down in December, January, February, and March. A tin ring was fixed at one end of each piece. These

rings were filled with water. The wood cut in December did not allow any water to pass. The January wood, after forty-eight hours, allowed a few drops to pass. During the same time the entire quantity ran through the February wood, while the water passed through the March wood in two hours and a half.

THE MERCHANT—A FABLE.

A MERCHANT once, whom Fortune plied
With favours rare on every side,
Grew rich apace; his ships were safe
Though storms might rave and breakers chafe;
To every clime his bonding sails
Were wafted by propitious gales;
While others, good and brave as he,
And no less wise on land or sea,
With varying fortunes often tried
The fierce domain of wind and tide,
And paid, sometimes, a goodly freight
In tribute to the Ocean-Fate.
No hidden reef, or sudden squall,
Or deadly calm (most feared of all)
Had e'er consigned his vessel's store
To coral grove or rocky shore!
And, more than this (so it is known),
Fate, when she will, can guard her own),
No agent proved an arrant knave,
No master found a watery grave,
No trusted clerk defaulter turned,
No partner stole what both had earned,
No market of a sudden fell,
Just when his factor wished to sell.

In short, his wines, tobaccos, teas,
Silks, satins, linens, laces, cheese,
His coffees, sugar, raisins, spice,
Were sure to bring the highest price;
And so it was he came to be
The richest merchant on the sea,
And lived—there's little need to say—
In such a princely sort of way.
The king himself could scarce afford
The gems that decked our merchant-lord!

A friendly neighbour, much amazed
At all the wealth on which he gazed,
Said, "Tell me, now—how may it be
That you have come to what we see?"
The merchant, smiling, swelled with pride,
And, like a monarch, thus replied:—
"How comes it?—plain enough, I trow;
It comes, my friend, of *knowing how!*"

With growing riches now, indeed,
The trader felt a growing greed,
And, giddy with prosperity,
Stakes all he has again at sea.
But now success no longer paid
The heedless risks the merchant made—
One bark was wrecked because her load,
For want of care, was ill-bestowed;
Another (lacking arms, they say)
To ruthless pirates fell a prey;
A third came safe, at last, to land
With goods no longer in demand;
In brief, his ventures proved so bad
He soon was stript of all he had,
And now among his fellow-men,
Was but a common man again;

Once more his friend inquiry made
Whence came disaster to his trade.
"What brought you to this dismal pass?"
"Twas *Fortune*," said the man, "alas!"
"Indeed? Well, well," the friend replied,
"Although her gold the dame denies,
She yet may teach you to be wise!"
So goes the world!—each thankless elf,
Whatever may be his worldly state,
Imputes his blunders to himself,
And lays his blunders all to Fate!

J. G. S.

LIABILITY OF RAILWAY COMPANIES TO PASSENGERS.

—At the Sheriffs' Court Mr. Commissioner Kerr decided an important point in respect of the liability of railway companies to the passengers they carry. On the 5th of August a merchant of Houndsditch, named Wolfsohn, took a return ticket at the Broad Street Station, to travel thence to Kew. When he went to the Kew Station to return, he inquired of the man at the wicket there if "this train," meaning one about to start, went through to Broad Street. He was answered in the affirmative, and accordingly took his seat. But when this train, which was really a special one sent before the ordinary train, reached Camden Station, Mr. Wolfsohn was informed that it did not go to Broad Street, and he was compelled to alight, and to wait for another train. He waited till two trains passed, but could not get a seat, for they were full. He was roughly used by the attendants

at the Camden Station, and so he took a cab to his home, and sued the company for damages for breach of contract. After hearing all the evidence, his honour decided in favour of the plaintiff, who got his verdict with costs. His honour was of opinion that there was evidence of the contract between plaintiff and the railway company in the tickets, and *prima facie* there was a contract to carry the plaintiff right through to Broad Street. The company had clothed the man at the wicket with authority, and his honour considered that plaintiff was quite justified in applying to him for information as to the destination of the train.

GEMS.

LANGUAGE.—Cold leaf to blazon our knowledge and cover our ignorance.

SLANDERERS are like flies that leap over all a man's good parts, to light only on his sores.

THERE are many hours in every man's life which are not spent in anything important; but, necessarily, they should not be passed idly.

PEOPLE run each other down as though they thought they could make pedestals of their neighbours' characters, and look tall by standing upon them.

By pulling your fingers from the water you leave no hole in the fluid; and by dying you leave no vacancy in the world.

SHE who exults in the loss of the reputation of other women should know that she does not win what they lose, however sadly she may be in need of it.

MISCELLANEOUS.

PETTIT AASE ISLAND, off the coast of Louisiana, contains an inexhaustible supply of rock salt.

THE Russian army numbers 1,185,915 men, in addition to 119,540 Cossacks liable to serve.

BOHEMIAN COAL.—Some rich bearings of superior coal have been discovered near Pilsen, in Bohemia.

THERE are 1,200 men, 150 women and 350 boys employed in glass making in the thirteen glass works of Wordsley, Ambleside, Stourbridge, and Dudley. Formerly the sand used in this manufacture came from Lynn, Norfolk; now they prefer the imported sand of Fontainebleau.

DR. GUYON states, in a paper to the Academy of Sciences, that a native dog, formerly found in the West India Islands, no longer exists. It is the ani described by Raymond Breton, a Dominican friar, in 1635. Two parrots, also described by this historian of Martinique, no longer are found; while a species found at St. Lucia, and noticed by Guilding, is overlooked by him and subsequent seventeenth century writers.

A MOUSE IN THE PANTRY.

WHEN I used to be out of temper, or naughty in any way, if grandfather were near he would call to me:

"Nancy, Nancy, take care! there's a mouse in the pantry!"

I often used to stop crying at this, and stand wondering what he meant. I often ran to the pantry, too, to see if there were really a mouse in the trap; but never found one. One day I said:

"Grandfather, I don't know what you mean. I have no pantry, and there are no mice in mother's, because I have looked ever so often." He smiled and said:

"Come, little woman, sit down here in the porch with me, and I'll tell you what I mean. Your heart, Mary, is the pantry; the little sins are the mice, that get in and nibble away all the good, and that makes you sometimes cross, and peevish, and fretful, unwilling to do as your mother wishes; and if you do not strive against them the mice will keep nibbling till all the good is eaten away. Now, I want to show you, my little girl, how to prevent this. To keep the mice out, you must set a trap for them—the trap of watchfulness, and have for the bait good resolutions and firmness."

"But, mother," said Nancy, now quite interested in the story, "wouldn't they nibble the resolutions after awhile?"

"No, Nancy; not if the watch is kept strictly and the bait a good one. I did not exactly understand it when grandfather first told me, for I was such a very little girl; but I know it was meant for me in some way, and after a while I began to find out what he meant. He told me, too, that I might store my pantry with good things if I watched it well. Do you know what that means, Nancy?"

"To be full of good always," said Nancy, whose tears were dried now.

"Yes; to store it with good principles, good thoughts, and kind feelings." H. H.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. P. O.—Certainly; the apprentice is legally bound.

SARAH FISHER.—Yes, the will is legal, and you should obtain probate.

MISS D.—Declined with thanks; the scraps, &c., you name would be useless to us.

AN OLD SMOKER.—You cannot soften a hard meerschaum pipe nor colour it except by fat smoking.

LITTLE JOHN, eighteen, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, fair, good tempered, and good looking.

H. E. O.—Write to the distinguished aeronaut you name, who, doubtless, will give you the required information.

J. B. BROWN.—Meerschaum is a natural clay, consisting chiefly of magnesite. It is found in the Crimea.

BOX AND COX.—Beware of the quick pamphlet named in your letter. Consult a medical man.

JONATHAN EDGAR.—The will appears valid. A stamp is not necessary, nor is the signature of an attorney.

BLUET-ET ANNE, eighteen, and fair. Respondent must have black hair and eyes, and be younger than herself.

BLUEBELL.—Your marriage will be valid if performed in the name you have previously borne.

STARS AND STRIPES.—Try soaking your tender feet nightly in a solution of bay-salt or Tindman's sea salt.

ALICE.—"Pensée à moi," properly translated, means "Think of me."

YOUNG AMBITION.—Handwriting scarcely yet fit for an office, but may easily be improved.

G. H. B., twenty. The young lady must not object to at least two years' courtship; money no object.

ALPHA, twenty-three, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, of good family, and in a good situation.

A CONSTANT READER.—Young men usually grow to the age of about twenty-one. Some do so after, until twenty-five, while others cease to grow at eighteen.

MAGT, nineteen, brown hair, gray eyes, and clear complexion. Respondent must be tall and dark; a Catholic preferred.

GET MORBID.—Cherries, apricots, &c., were introduced into Italy by Lucullus, from Carthage, and other parts of Asia Minor, in the year 114 B.C.

B. R., nineteen, 5 ft. 8 in. in height, good looking, curly hair, and in a good position, wants a pretty young lady with a good temper to make him happy.

QUESTIONER.—"Month's Mind," in the Roman Catholic Church, is the name of a ceremony performed for that term for the dead.

EPISTOLARY.—To restore faded writing, get 1 oz. of powdered nut-gall, boil it for some time in a pint of white wine, wet the paper with it, and the writing will be revived.

A. J., twenty, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, considered good looking, and holding a lucrative situation. Respondent must be tall, and good looking, with about 3000.

DAIRYMAID.—If you wish to keep milk sweet, put a little borax in it, and it will remain so for several days, while other milk will become sour.

HEARTSEASE, seventeen, 4 ft. 10 in. in height, brown hair, and dark gray eyes, not what is called pretty, but that she will leave to be found out.

A WANDERER.—The word "gipsy" is probably a corruption of Egyptian. They migrated from the East in the 15th century; are called wanderers by the Germans, heathens by the Dutch, Tartars by the Danes and Swedes.

WILLIE BACON, twenty-two, tall, dark, hazel eyes, black moustache, in a good profession, and has an income of 500 a year for life. Respondent must be young, and of a loving disposition.

NEEDLEWORK.—The wages at the Government Stores, Pimlico, vary from 6s. to 70s. per week, according to skill. On admission a young person could only earn the lower sum.

A CONSTANT READER.—An apprenticeship indenture may be legal although not drawn by a lawyer. Whether an apprentice may work piece-work depends on the terms of the indenture and the custom of the trade.

H. Y. C.—"Dum spiro spero" is Latin for "While I breathe I hope." "Da nobis locum domine" means "Give us light, oh, Lord." (Your writing is good, and only requires continual practice for its improvement.)

BESSIE GRAY.—1. Poor girl; so you have realized by experience that the "course of true love never did run smooth." After a two years' engagement of a young man, and in the sincere belief that a mutual affection existed, her swain has taken another young woman home, which she dislikes, the more that she "knows what sort of a girl she is." Under these circumstances, poor "Bessie" asks us "would it be better to forgive him if it is time and forget, or get rid of him?" Take the former course, "Bessie," for what can the poor fellow do more than, (as you say he has) ex-

press his extreme sorrow for his conduct, and declare that he can love no other than you? Beware the "green-eyed monster." "Bessie," for the future. 2. Disregard the "anonymous" letters, especially as you know from whom they come. 3. Whichever he pleases.

L. I. B. C. J., 5 ft. 8 in. in height, dark brown hair, blue eyes, has an income of 1400, very good tempered, and of a loving disposition.

EMILY and ROSE. "Emily," eighteen, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, blue eyes, and auburn hair. "Rose" is also eighteen, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, dark brown hair, highly respectable, and very domesticated. Respondent must be tall and dark.

CHARLOTTE.—The best way to dress salt fish is first to soak it in cold water for an hour or two, after that put it in cold water, with a little vinegar and salt; let it simmer, but not quite boil, serve with egg-sauce, parsnips, or beet-root.

LIZIE WEBB.—May arise from indigestion; consult a medical man. It is said that the celebrated author of the "Mysteries of Udolpho" had actually had pork for supper for the express purpose of preventing the dreams of which you complain.

ELEANOR, nineteen, medium height, fair complexion, blue eyes, brown hair, and of a loving and cheerful disposition, no fortune, but thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must not be more than twenty-nine, dark, and of an affectionate disposition.

LEWIS.—The feet of women are not less susceptible to cold than those of men; they walk on the same damp earth; calf or kid skin is best for winter; a rubber sole is good, but rubber shoes should be discarded altogether; they retain the perspiration, make the feet tender, and produce a greater liability to cold.

IF WILL.

Does the road wind up hill all the way?—
Yes, to the very end.
Will the day's journey take the whole long day?—
From morn to night, my friend.
But is there for the night a resting-place?
A roof when the slow dark hours begin?
May not the darkness hide it from my face?
You cannot miss that inn.
Shall I meet other wayfarers at night,
Those who have gone before?
Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?
They will not keep you standing at the door.
Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?
Of labour you shall find the sum.
Will there be beds for me and all who seek?
—Yes, beds for all who come. G. R.

ERNEST, nineteen, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, blue eyes, dark hair, and slight moustache, with an income of (at present) 1500, wishes to correspond with an accomplished young lady not older than himself; a brunette preferred.

HARRIET DELL, medium height, fair complexion, dark brown hair, hazel eyes, an amiable disposition, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must not be more than five-and-twenty, tall, dark, and of a cheerful disposition.

A LOVER OF RELIGION.—You ask how the mother of a family, married to an unbeliever, could bring up her children religiously? Oppose not the authority of the father to the authority of the mother, but apply to God. If a child commit a fault, or, on the contrary, perform a good action, by reference to the Scriptures, they will be answered, reproved, or encouraged; have a Bible always near, encourage the reading of it, without making it a toil.

KENMORE.—You are right. Abraham Newland is the slang term for a bank-note. It had its origin in the fact that one Abraham Newland, in his capacity as chief cashier, signed every note; of the great popularity of this name you may judge by the following extract from an old song, which ran thus:

"For fashion and arts, should you seek foreign parts,
It matters not wherever you land,
Hebrew, Latin, or Greek, the same language they speak—
The language of Abraham Newland."

CHORUS.

Oh, Abraham Newland, notified Abraham Newland!
With compliments crammed, you may die and be d-d,
If you haven't an Abraham Newland!"

FLORENCE S. and EDITH S., sisters. "Florence," seventeen, rather tall, dark, good tempered, and well educated. "Edith," eighteen, fair, amiable, very good looking. Respondents must be dark, and have small incomes.

EMILY.—To remove the glossy appearance produced on the skin after washing with soap, breathe on the towel, and then rub your face with it; this is a simple remedy, but efficacious.

BLANCHET L'ETANG, petite, golden hair, very deep violet eyes, fair, and ladylike, has no fortune, but can offer a fond and loving heart to a young man of gentlemanly appearance and steady habits.

W. J. S. (a Scotchman), nineteen, in a good situation, splendid prospects, considered good looking, and is rather tall. Respondent to be about eighteen, a good musician, with dark hair and eyes, need not be good looking, but of a loving disposition.

J. T. W., a mechanic, with a little money in the bank, twenty-three, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, fair, slight moustache, and in a good situation, earning 20s. per week. Respondent must be nineteen or twenty, good looking, domesticated, and fond of home.

CURIOS.—The custom of shaking hands originated with the Romans. They had a goddess whose name was "Fides," or "Fidelity." She wore a white veil, emblematic of modesty; her symbol was two right hands joined, therefore in all compacts among the Greeks and Romans it was usual to take each other by the hand to signify their intention of keeping the agreement.

GRONCH.—Your teacher is quite correct; water will boil at a lower temperature on the top of a mountain than when on a level with the sea, because the air becomes more rarified; consequently, it is easier to cause that agitation of the water called boiling, which is, in fact, quite independent of heat.

This may be ascertained by putting cold water under an air-pump and exhausting the air, and it will boil even while turning into ice. The monks of the Great St. Bernard Pass "have had proof of this when trying to boil meat, the water boiling away before it becomes sufficiently heated; for this reason they cannot make good tea or coffee.

LILY H., eighteen, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, dark, blue eyes, rosy cheeks, a fine figure, amiable, and of a cheerful and loving disposition, has no fortune at present, but good prospects. Respondent must be tall, fair, and about twenty.

ORIENTAL WATERS, a young Englishman, twenty-four, 6 ft. 10 in. in height, dark curly hair, whiskers and moustache, very lively and affectionate, and holds a government appointment, wishes to meet with a tall, young lady of good family, about twenty-four; a farmer's daughter preferred.

T. M. SOUTHERN.—The automaton chess-player, to which you allude was a trifle. A clever boy was concealed in the pretended automaton, and in the desk or table at which it was seated. By a clever arrangement of wheels the inferior was enabled to be exhibited without displaying the boy. The automaton was more than once beaten.

MAY, AMY, and MILLY. "May," seventeen, tall, dark hair, and eyes, fair, and good figure. "Amy," seventeen, rather tall, blue eyes, light hair, fair complexion, good figure, and fond of home. "Milly," eighteen, medium height, gray eyes, brown hair, very industrious, and will make a loving wife. Respondents must be tall, dark young men about twenty; "May" and "Amy" would prefer sailors.

O. B.—Wood absorbs fresh water more readily than salt water. Two pieces of oak from the same plank, each 5 lb. in weight, were exposed for eleven months to the action of salt and fresh water. The one in the salt water increased only by 2.41 lb. in weight, while the other increased by 4.14 lb.

JESSEY and LAURA.—"Jessey," seventeen, tall, rather light complexion, dark hair, hazel eyes, good looking, very good tempered, and domesticated; respondent must be dark and good tempered. "Laura," twenty, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, good looking, rather dark, hazel eyes, dark brown hair, good tempered, rather good looking, and very domesticated. Respondent must be fair and good tempered.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

HARRY HARVEY is responded to by—"Gipsy," eighteen, dark, cheerful, domesticated, and is the daughter of a tradesman.

Y. N. by—"Thompson," a widower about fifty, holding a situation of moderate income; a Dissenter with a daughter about eighteen, well educated—"C. S.," a widower, forty-five, with two children, ages twelve and seven, in business; and—"T. S.," a bachelor, forty-six, respectfully connected.

EDWARD E. by—"Annie H.," eighteen, fair, rosy cheeks, dark brown hair and eyes, and fond of home.

JACK—"J. J.," nineteen, 5 ft. 2 in., blue eyes, light brown hair, good features, industrious, and considered very pretty.

W. H. T. by—"Amy," who thinks she would suit him. "Amy" is nineteen years of age, of medium height, nut brown hair and dark eyes, of a cheerful and lively disposition, and a most magnificent singer. She would do up in her power to make "W. H. T." home a happy one. "Amy" has a small income now, and upon the death of an aged and near relative she will possess 4000.

M. W. or N. B. by—"E. G. B.," twenty-six, tall, dark, considered good looking, in a good business, of a kind and affectionate disposition, and fond of music and home comforts; and by—"Genuine," thirty-two, rather tall and dark, considered good looking, of a kind, cheerful, and affectionate disposition, with an income of 2000 per annum, and a gentleman by birth and education.

JEM by—"Mable," nineteen, fair, blue eyes, amiable disposition, understands his business, and is possessed of property; and—"Marion," who wants a partner, she has blue eyes, light brown wavy hair, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, thoroughly domesticated, and considered pretty. "Marion" thinks she would suit "Jem," her parents being highly respectable tradespeople.

O. B. (a widower) by—"Miss Rose," thirty-four, fair, blue eyes, medium height, has no objection to become a stepmother, and is very domesticated; and—"Violet," twenty-eight, industrious, cheerful, of domestic habits, fond of home, rather tall, fair, and rather good looking.

ALICE by—"Anglicus," who thinks he would find in her, and she in him, what might be mutually desired.

LIZIE by—"G. P.," tall, dark, considered good looking, in a good situation, and has a moderate income of his own.

NELLY by—"Tom R.," a well-to-do mechanic, twenty, tall, good looking, auburn hair, and hazel eyes, would like to have a *cursus de vite* of "Nelly," if she thinks he would suit her.

CATHERINE by—"T. K.," twenty-four, 5 ft. 5 in. in height, considered passable looking, inclining to staidness, a mate in the merchant service, and just returned from a lengthy voyage; will send *carte de visite* if wished.

Y. N. by—"P. S. H.," who, like herself, is alone in the world, in every sense of the word a Christian, about fifty, a widower, with no children, and would make her happy.

STANHOPE by—"Hugh," twenty-four, 5 ft. 7 in. in height, fond of music, can play the piano well, and in a comfortable position, but not sufficient without a little help; and—"Thomas," twenty-three, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, brown hair, slight moustache, light complexion, small fortune, and a kind and loving heart.

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